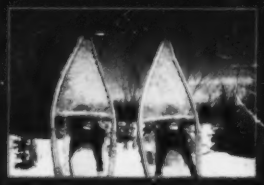
First Nation Forestry Program

SUCCESS STORIES

In partnership with First Nations



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First Nation
Forestry Program

SUCCESS STORIES

FOREWORD

Through the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), First Nations people are seizing opportunities to improve the quality of life in their communities while respecting the principles of sustainable forest management. We are pleased to present these highlights of successes achieved by First Nations.

The forest plays an integral role in the social, spiritual and cultural lives of First Nations across Canada. It also offers a foundation upon which First Nations peoples and communities can develop an economic base, while maintaining their traditional connection with the land.

Almost 80 percent of First Nations across Canada live within our boreal and temperate forest regions, and depend on forest-based activities. The population of these communities is growing by about 2.5 percent every year. Leaders of these communities believe

that participating actively in forest-based activities is vital to creating jobs and a sustainable economy for their people.

Since 1996, the FNFP has funded some 1,150 projects. These partnerships among First Nations, the Government of Canada and industry have helped 4,800 First Nations people improve their skills and apply sustainable forest management practices. This program builds upon the Government of Canada's commitments to ensuring a clean, healthy environment and to creating and sharing opportunity with Aboriginal people to build a better future and stronger communities.

We hope that you find these success stories interesting and informative, and we congratulate the participants on what they have accomplished.

Minister of Natural Resources Canada

Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

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PROGRAM PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) is to improve the economic conditions in status Indian communities with full consideration of the principles of sustainable forest management.

The FNFP purpose includes four objectives towards which federal funding is directed. They are as follows:

1. to enhance the capacity of First Nations to operate and participate in forest-based businesses and increase the number of long-term jobs in forestry for First Nation members;
2. to increase First Nation cooperation and partnerships;
3. to investigate the feasibility of trust funds, capital pools, or other similar mechanisms for financing First Nation forestry development; and
4. to enhance the capacity of First Nations to sustainably manage reserve forests.

PROJECT PROFILES

The following FNFP stories represent First Nation accomplishments in different forest-related activities across Canada. Each project has qualities that make it unique in its own right. Most importantly, the examples provide a role model to other First Nations wishing to develop their own projects or who simply want to gain some insight into First Nation forest-related issues and development.

CATEGORY 1:
FOREST MANAGEMENT

Waswanipi Cree First Nation, Quebec

The Waswanipi Cree community is situated 150 kilometres west of Chibougamau on the banks of the Waswanipi and Chibougamau rivers. Highway 113 between the Lac Saint-Jean and Abitibi regions runs through the community's land. The total area of 61,344 hectares is divided into two legal entities: lands 1a (37,562 hectares) and 1b (23,782 hectares). More than 83 per cent, or approximately 51,036 hectares, of the total land is productive and accessible forest land. The vast majority of the forest consists of softwood species (85 per cent), of which 81 per cent is black spruce and 10 per cent is jack pine. The forest is in an advanced state of maturity, 85 per cent of it being 90 years of age or more.

The community has a total population of 1,250 people, nearly 1,000 of whom live on the land. More than 60 per cent of the population is less than 35 years of age. Although a substantial portion of the population still derives its livelihood from traditional activities such as hunting, trapping, and fishing, more modern economic activities now play an increasing role in the local economy. Among these, preference is given to forestry because of the nature of the land as well as the interest that local residents have taken in the forest as an economic opportunity.

The Waswanipi Band Council has been active in forestry operations since 1982. The Mishtuk Corporation, which is wholly owned by the community, harvests wood on the reserve. Since 1991, average annual wood harvesting has been pegged at 48,000 cubic metres, as compared to 55,000 cubic metres in the past. This change was brought about as a result of community pressure, primarily from trappers lobbying in favour of a management approach more oriented towards multi-purpose land use. The community, therefore, shifted from a conventional approach (clearcutting of large areas) to a checkerboard cutting strategy, in which cutting blocks of no more than 40 hectares are spread carefully across an area of land in order to minimize the impact on other forest resources.

At the same time, the Band Council set up the Apit-See-Win Cooperative, which conducted silvicultural operations on the reserve under the federal government's Forest Management Program for Indian Lands (FMPIL). The FMPIL was implemented in 1985 by the federal government, and ran until 1995. During the 11-year life of FMPIL, the Canadian Forest Service provided $2,505,000 in contributions to support various work and related technical services. During this period, the Band Council invested $1,753,000 in these same activities. The combination of these two funds provided over $400,000 annually. Project-related activities generated 400 person-weeks of work annually. The principal activities undertaken were: site preparation, reforestation of cutting areas, the recovery of wood going to waste, and road construction. In 1994, an integrated resource management plan was developed under FMPIL that included both the objectives of local residents and sustainable development imperatives.

The community has been involved in the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) since 1996-1997. In 1997-1998, for example, on-reserve forestry activities, including wood harvesting, accounted for sales of nearly $1.2 million achieved through 650 person-weeks of work. In 1997-1998, the FNFP contributed $86,000 towards this result, clearly illustrating the vitality and self-sufficiency that the community has developed over the years. Achievements include 310 hectares of checkerboard cutting, 800,000 trees planted, 50 hectares of pre-commercial thinning, and approximately 30 kilometres of road construction. This last activity, which represents a substantial investment on the part of the Band Council, is vital to the continued implementation of the checkerboard cutting strategy and demonstrates that necessary efforts are being made to respect the choices made by the community.

The partnership between the Waswanipi Cree community and the FNFP continued into 1998-1999 with a contribution of $68,700 from the FNFP for harvesting and training activities. The total project value during the same year was $908,600. From 1999-2002, the annual level of forestry activities had been about the same as the previous two years. For the first six years of the FNFP (1996-2002), the community received contributions totalling $504,475, or an average of $84,080 per year. The average total value of projects for those six years had been $986,200.

Last but not least among the achievements was the signing of a partnership agreement with Domtar for the construction of a sawmill in Waswanipi in 1995. The mill, 51 per cent of which is owned by the community, went into operation in the summer of 1997. It has an annual production capacity of about 100,000 cubic metres. Half of its supply of raw materials will be drawn from the Waswanipi lands and the other half from the public forest under a Timber Supply and Forest Management Agreement (CAAF) with the government of Quebec. The community of Waswanipi was consulted prior to the project and expressed fears about the risk of over-cutting. Environmentally-friendly terms and conditions of operation adapted to Aboriginal values were adopted and an annual public consultation process was established.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$504,475
FN and Other	$5,412,664
Total	$5,917,139

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Lil'wat Nation Follows Its Vision For Its Reserve Forests, British Columbia

The Mount Currie First Nation, known by its traditional name as Lil'wat, has been actively involved in forest management on its reserve lands since completing its first forest management plan in 1987. Most of its 1,800 members live on-reserve in the Pemberton Valley north of Whistler, and 50 per cent of the residents are less than 25 years old; consequently, employment development and increased stewardship of the forests and other natural resources within its traditional territory remain the strategic priorities for this community.

"Mount Currie is interested in sustainably managing the lands held within their Indian Reserves, as well as exploring other forestry-related business ventures," explains Mount Currie Councillor Lyle Leo, who is also CEO of their economic development corporation, Creekside Resources Inc.

Previous First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) support has allowed the community to develop a management plan for their Woodlot License, explore the feasibility of expanding an existing forestry-based industrial park on reserve lands, and initiate and implement joint ventures in logging and recreation site management with various partners.

"With the aid of FNFP funds, substantial progress has been made in pursuing our identified forestry objectives," adds Leo.

However, there was a definite need recognized within the community to improve the management of their reserve lands of approximately 2,800 hectares held outside of the Woodlot License. Some inventories and silviculture work had been undertaken in the early 1990s, but surveys had not been carried out to determine the efficacy of the treatments, or if further treatments were required.

With assistance from the FNFP, Mount Currie addressed these needs and worked with a local consultant to update and expand the inventory data, determine what treatments were required to manage lands presently under-utilized, and initiate trials to determine appropriate hardwood management regimes such as spacing, commercial thinning, pruning, and fertilization. The information collected and the works performed may also be used to pursue certification of these lands under one or more of the existing certification processes used in British Columbia.

A number of Mount Currie members have worked with the consultant conducting surveys, developing prescriptions for lands to be treated, and undertaking any work prescribed. Mount Currie technicians were available to work on this project and they gained training in forest management, harvesting, and silviculture. A large number of young people in the 18-24 age bracket, where unemployment is the highest, received training in forestry work. As a result this project provided the skills and work experience essential for Mount Currie to bid on silviculture contracts offered by major tenure holders working in their traditional territory.

"The emphasis of this project was to maximize crew time doing a variety of the tasks required for sustainable forest management," says Leo. "Major Licensees, Ministry of Forests, and BC Hydro have expressed interest in using the services of Mount Currie on their individual operating areas within Mount Currie traditional territory, so not only have we improved the management of our own lands, we have increased employment opportunities for our young people as a result of FNFP's funding."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$47,490
FN and Other	$28,252
Total	$75,742

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Gwich'in Tribal Council Plays Leadership Role in Forest Management, Northwest Territories

The traditional territory of the Gwich'in Tribal Council embraces two mountain ranges, three major rivers, and 57,000 square kilometres of alpine tundra and black spruce forest in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. This vast ecosystem includes Canada's largest delta, the Mackenzie River delta. The area is home for the Porcupine and Bluenose caribou herds, moose, grizzly bears, and numerous small furbearers. Broad whitefish, Dolly Varden char, inconnu, burbot, and northern pike populate the rivers and lakes in the region.

For the past several decades Gwich'in Elders have observed changes in the natural environment of the Gwich'in Settlement Area. They have seen changes in the climate and migration habits of the caribou herds. They have seen the excessive harvesting of trees near villages for fuel and building material and a general decline in the health of the forests. They have noticed that few people today practise the traditional Dene ways of harvesting trees.

Jennifer Walker-Larsen, the fisheries and forestry biologist for the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB), says the Elders had a great deal of influence on the decision by the Tribal Council and Board to develop a comprehensive forest management plan. The Council and Board relied heavily on advice from Elders to develop a stewardship plan for the natural resources in the region and for information on traditional forestry practices.

Walker-Larsen notes that the GRRB's mission is to consult and include community members in the management of the natural resources in their territory. This is the foundation for all initiatives, programs, and studies undertaken by the Board. One of its primary mandates is to ensure that any wood harvesting activity on the land does not conflict with the Gwich'in traditional lifestyle.

"Traditionally, the Gwich'in used the entire tree," Walker-Larsen points out. "The branches and tops of trees were used for flooring, tree gum was used for medicinal purposes, and the trunks were used for housing and fuel."

The Elders' concerns led to the development of permanent forest plots to monitor forest health in the settlement area. This project received funding support from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) and the GRRB as well as contributions from the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and Aurora College in Inuvik.

"We approached the First Nation Forestry Program with a proposal to carry out the forest monitoring project, and the response was very positive. The project falls within its mandate to assist First Nations in having a more significant role in the sustainable management of the forests in their territory," Walker-Larsen said. The partnership with the FNFP continued for three years, during which time the Gwich'in community received a total of $41,300 in financial contributions from the program. The funding contributed to an Elder's workshop, the forest use survey, and the forest-monitoring project.

Launched in the summer of 1998, the forest-monitoring project is one element of a forest management plan developed for the

Gwich'in Settlement Area. The project involves long-term, ongoing monitoring of two plots of forest land, located 15 kilometres south of Inuvik and a few kilometres west of Campbell Lake. The first plot uses the monitoring protocol designed by the Smithsonian Institution and the Biosphere Program that studies changes in forest health and biodiversity. The second plot uses the Acid Rain National Early Warning System (ARNEWS) methodology to measure changes in forest health that result from pollution.

Initial work on the side-by-side plots took place in July 1998 and included training for approximately 10 Gwich'in community members. Part of the early fieldwork involved establishing the parameters of the plots to be monitored, conducting an inventory of trees and other vegetation, assessing the health of the trees, and creating a map of the study area. Training for plot one, a 100-square metre area, was provided by Marshall Buchanan, an Inuvik-based forestry consultant. Training and fieldwork for plot two was delivered by James Brandt and Jim Weber, both Forest Health Technicians with the Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada, in Edmonton.

The study is expected to provide the GRRB with insights into incremental environmental changes in the region. The baseline information collected in 1998 will provide a means to compare and contrast changes that take place in the settlement area well into the 21st century. During the planned 10-15 years of the study, Gwich'in community members and forest technicians from the Canadian Forest Service will conduct annual monitoring surveys in early and late summer.

The forest monitoring project is one important element in the GRRB's forest management plan, which also includes surveys of traditional and contemporary forest uses, vegetation mapping, timber cruising, and collection of traditional knowledge about the forest and forest use.

While scientific monitoring of the forests in the Gwich'in Settlement Area is relatively new, it is an important step in continuing the Gwich'in's role in the protection and management of their traditional territory. With an ecosystem that includes trees of up to 700 years old in some sections of the Arctic Red River watershed, an extraordinary range of fish, bird, and wildlife species, and evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the land for more than 10,000 years, there is a compelling urgency to ensure the natural resources of the region are carefully managed. The forest monitoring project is one way that the Gwich'in will continue to play an active role in maintaining a healthy environmental balance in their ancestral territory.

The project continued in 2001-2002.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$72,780
FN and Other	$231,771
Total	$304,551

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Meeting the Challenge, the Forestry Unit of the North Shore Tribal Council, Ontario

The past few years have been challenging ones for the Forestry Unit of the North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC). Established in the early 1990s, the Unit was created to respond to the concern that there was little being done to manage the forests, including harvest planning and regulation of operations. Through the Federal-Provincial Forest Resource Development Agreements (the precursors to the First Nation Forestry Program), the Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada, provided the initial funding for establishing the Unit. While the Forestry Unit has gone through a few changes over the past 10 years, it has continued to build capacity and enhance its operation with respect to helping seven member First Nations manage their on-reserve forest land and develop viable economic and employment development initiatives. The seven First Nations are located between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, Ontario, along the northern shore of Lake Huron.

The Forestry Unit is currently in a transitional, enhancement phase in the delivery of its forestry program. The primary function of the unit is to provide advice and technical assistance in all aspects of forestry operations, including management and planning, harvesting, silvicultural work, and road building. Canadian Forest Service (CFS) programs contributed financial support for these activities for the 10-year period up to 1995. The FNFP has continued this support, contributing $241,550 during the period 1996-1997 to 2001-2002. In addition, the total project value of the Forestry Unit work has increased from $69,400 in 1996-1997 to $359,000 in 2001-2002.

In line with the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) objective of increasing First Nation co-operation and partnerships to facilitate self-reliance in forestry, the Forestry Unit has been working to stimulate revenue-generating opportunities.

"We encourage First Nation enterprises to become self-sufficient," says Jukka Heikurinen, a professional forester and the Forestry Unit director. "We are trying to concentrate more on providing forestry services on a fee-for-service basis to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clients. We need to spend more time on external contracts, such as planning, forest operation assistance, timber regulation and environmental control; however, we recognize that we need to maintain our focus on helping with on-reserve operations."

Heikurinen feels that this sometimes creates a dilemma, as Unit staff members need to plan their time carefully in order to maintain a balance of generating revenue from external contracts and providing services to First Nations.

The FNFP Ontario Management Committee (OMC) fully supports the efforts of the Forestry Unit to balance the need to provide forestry service to NSTC member First Nations and create revenue-generating opportunities. The OMC recognizes that becoming financially self-reliant is a process that may take a number of years. Committee members are

pleased that the Forestry Unit has worked hard to develop its capacity and that of its member First Nations in terms of developing and enhancing forestry sector businesses.

The Forestry Unit provides another important service with the operation of a Geographical Information System (GIS). The GIS is used for resource management projects across the Tribal Council area. Much of the initial funding for the purchase and installation of the GIS and training of staff at each of the NSTC First Nation offices was provided through the CFS programs. "The GIS is an important planning tool to protect the integrity of the forest," says Heikurinen. This digitized mapping system is also used for fee-for-service projects contracted to external clients.

In 1998, the Forestry Unit facilitated the purchase of Robinson-Huron Forestry Company by area First Nations. Robinson-Huron Forestry Company Inc. (RHFCI) holds a Crown Timber License in the North Shore forest. This license provides First Nations an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in the forest sector. The financial support to prepare the initial business plan and to examine the due diligence aspects of the purchase was provided by the FNFP, as the OMC members recognized this as a significant opportunity for the area First Nations.

"It has been a crucial time in the history of Crown land management and we managed to get in before the door closed," says Heikurinen. "It is an exciting time for First Nations because they own the company, and by employing First Nation contractors for timber harvesting and road building, they can help community members build marketable job skills." The Forestry Unit has been contracted to provide forest management and technical support to RHFCI. They have also secured contracts for silvicultural work with the sustainable forestry license company and Northshore Forest Incorporated.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is contracting the Forestry Unit's services to

provide timber permitting and harvest regulation services to North Shore area First Nations on their behalf. "Working with the Forestry Unit was the first time that they had provided funding of this nature," says Heikurinen, "but in some cases we still need to update the 20-year resource management plans before we can issue any timber cutting permits. Securing the funding to do this can often be a challenge."

The establishment of Mitigaawaaki Marketing Co-operative Inc. was also a project that the Forestry Unit facilitated. On behalf of First Nations in the local area, including the First Nations in the NSTC and several First Nations on Manitoulin Island, Mitigaawaaki provides marketing assistance for commercial sales of timber and enhancement of markets for non-timber forest products. In 1996, the FNFP provided funding to establish the operating parameters and business strategy of the Co-operative and continued to support Mitigaawaaki in succeeding years, as they explored forestry market opportunities.

While Mitigaawaaki is not a business operation of the NSTC, the Forestry Unit provides administrative and management services to the Co-operative. Until early in 2001 Lorraine Rekmans was the negotiation and communication coordinator for Mitigaawaaki and the Forestry Unit. (In fall 2001, Rekmans began working for the National Aboriginal Forestry Association in Ottawa.)

"There is a real need to market good quality forest products. We are approaching a new era in sustainable forest management where you need to get the best value per hectare for your product," says Rekmans. She says there are few marketing difficulties with high-grade timber, whereas the low-grade timber is difficult to sell, especially as it deteriorates in value and quality over time while overhead costs remain fixed. To sell the less desirable, low-grade hardwood, Mitigaawaaki works on behalf of First Nation Co-operative members to secure larger contracts for a better market price, based upon timber being supplied from a variety of First Nation sources. A collective

marketing approach is needed to secure larger sales agreements.

FNFP funding has allowed Mitigaawaaki to help members explore opportunities for non-timber forest product sales. "There are large and lucrative untapped markets for a variety of non-timber forest products," says Rekmans, "and we are trying to help our co-operators operate on a competitive basis." A feasibility study completed with funding from FNFP and Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) showed that there are viable business opportunities with respect to marketing of products such as berries, herbs, greenery products, decorative twigs to be used in floral arrangements, and maple syrup. A business-planning model was developed in 1998, which has been used to help write business plans for individual entrepreneurs across the NSTC area and help them establish or enhance the operations of non-timber forest products businesses. "Often small suppliers can't provide enough of a product to meet the market demand," says Rekmans. "Mitigaawaaki Marketing Co-operative provides an essential service in terms of coordinating suppliers to meet contract demands."

In addition to Heikurinen and an administrative clerk, the NSTC Forestry Unit also has several forest technicians on staff. A network of First Nation resource officers from across the Tribal Council area is also in place to coordinate or assist with forestry initiatives in their local area.

Funding from the FNFP has been key to the success of the Forestry Unit, according to both Rekmans and Heikurinen. "The FNFP plays a crucial role in the development of First Nation enterprises," says Rekmans. "Funding has been provided to us that has allowed us to develop business enterprises employing in excess of 50 people. It has also allowed us to facilitate the involvement of other federal and provincial funding agencies in the development of business ideas." INAC, FedNor, Human Resources Development Canada, ABC, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources are some of the main partners.

"FNFP funding that allows us to complete specific projects is very important to us," says Heikurinen. "When project money ends, we lose people, which slows down our ability to become self-sufficient. I hope the FNFP continues until we become self-sufficient and that our operation continues to fit within the FNFP objectives."

"We are trying to maintain a good business," says Heikurinen. "We are all willing to meet the challenges for the future of on-reserve management. In order to manage the forest, we need to have a larger land base and we need to expand. We want to be a larger shareholder in the forest sector. The Forestry Unit is committed to providing opportunities to First Nation communities to create work on an on-going basis."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$241,550
FN and Other	$1 285,950
Total	$1 527,500

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Developing a Forest Management Plan, Eel Ground First Nation, New Brunswick

A band council resolution passed in 1990 and renewed in April 1998 continues to have positive effects on the residents in the First Nation community of Eel Ground, New Brunswick. The resolution gives the Band Council the control it needs to proceed with the implementation of the proposed forest management plan.

The dedication and team work of the economic development and forest management staff has succeeded in creating approximately 40 full-time seasonal jobs for residents in the community. Several interesting projects have been implemented over the past few years, making Eel Ground a community recognized for its success in economic development.

The program undertaken by the Eel Ground First Nation was first implemented under the Federal-Provincial Forest Resource Development Agreement in effect from 1982-1995 and a federal program jointly funded by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) in fiscal year 1995-1996. Since then, the program has been funded partly by the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP). Since 1996 the FNFP has contributed $346,700 to Eel Ground First Nation for various forest management related activities. For 2001-2002, the total value of the contribution agreement for projects was $22,860.

During early implementation, forestry development officer Steve Ginnish and his crew received training to ensure the treatments were conducted in accordance with technical criteria and environmental legislation. The crew is now capable of performing treatments that meet the required standards off-reserve.

In order to effectively deal with the program's growing work force, Ginnish hired two additional foremen, one of whom is a recent graduate from the New Brunswick Forest Ranger School in Fredericton.

The benefits of implementing the forest management plan are felt not only by those employed by the program, but also by residents in the community. The recent acquisition of materials such as a portable sawmill, planer, and dry kiln will enable them to utilize saw log material obtained from forest management activities for their domestic construction needs. These materials will also help in diversifying their development opportunities.

The crew's expertise is also sparking offers from off-reserve companies, including UPM-Kymmene Ltd. and Weyerhaeuser Limited.

Training of new crews will continue once identified through a regional bilateral agreement with Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC). New treatments, such as semi-commercial thinning will be carried out.

To ensure the continuation of the program, research is being conducted to identify other employment opportunities under the program. With the help of research assistance from the Canadian Forest Service and funds available through FNFP, an abandoned shale rock pit that has served the community for a number of years has been rehabilitated. A second research project involving the growing of Bur Oak has now been initiated on this site.

The commitment of Chief George Ginnish and his council, along with Steve Ginnish and the crews, has contributed to the recognition of the forest management program was not only a success, but also a source of much-needed employment and economic benefits to Eel Ground.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$346,700
FN and Other	$66,400
Total	$413,100

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Forest Management Planning and Sawmill Development, Saskatchewan

Recent projects in the Meadow Lake area of Saskatchewan prepared forest management plans for nine reserves and their 60,000 hectares of land. The project also incorporated training sessions for a number of First Nations people to assist them in obtaining employment.

With a $30,000 contribution in 1996-1997 from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), administered by the Canadian Forest Service in Prince Albert, Peter Mazuren was hired as forest management coordinator. Working out of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, his work covered the interests of the Flying Dust, Island Lake, Makwa Sahgaiehcan, Waterhen Lake, Canoe Lake, Buffalo River, Clearwater River, Birch Narrows, and English River First Nations.

Mazuren set up a Geographical Information System (GIS) to gather his data. The entire project ran three to four years. In that time, First Nations people were surveyed to find out how they felt about their natural resources. Then, after a number of meetings, management plans were drawn up for both forest and agricultural land, based on what was important to residents. "Our survey tried to reach every house. We asked people what they valued most in their surroundings. Then we incorporated it into individual management plans."

Because housing was one of their main concerns, one reserve built 20 houses. Some Nations wanted to sell timber. The process helped to train people. Some now operate

their own companies. "Initially, we needed to pinpoint timber resources. We sold 200,000 cubic metres and accomplished other projects," says Mazuren.

Mazuren was also involved in the creation of a portable sawmill at Flying Dust First Nation. Before the mill could open for business, about $100,000 in new equipment was purchased including a circular head rig saw, a baker bandery saw, a board edger, a forklift, and a tractor. The band contributed some of the money and other funds were obtained from Human Resources Development Canada along with $39,945 from FNFP in 1997-1998 to fund training of the sawmill employees. Training was offered to 16 First Nations people. They were taught basic machinery operation and safety, with an emphasis on work experience.

The training program began in March 1997, and by April participants were on the job in the mill. Funding ended September 26, 1997,

but the band kept the program going until the end of November. There is no current funding for a second phase, which would require about $500,000 to purchase additional equipment in order to complete a finished product.

Although the mill will not continue to operate, the project has made a real difference for some of its participants. Of the 16 initial participants, eight finished the training program and five continue to be employed in other jobs with the Band.

Mazuren, who is no longer involved with either project, is happy with what he was able to accomplish through the operation of the mill and the related training program. "We did pretty well. Participants really developed their self-esteem. In the beginning they thought they couldn't do it. One lady was afraid to go up on the forklift. Then she and the others realized they could. They got a lot of pleasure out of the program and found it very interesting."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$69,945
FN and Other	$31,900
Total	$101,845

For further information, please contact:

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Management Co.
Flying Dust First Nation
Meadow Lake, SK S9X 1T8
(306) 236-5654

Lac La Croix First Nation Negotiates Agreement, Ontario

Lac La Croix First Nation has compiled a First Nation forest management plan and business strategy as part of its commitment to the land co-management partnership with Abitibi Consolidated Inc., a private forestry company with a paper mill in Fort Francis.

Lac La Croix is a very traditional community with deep spiritual values. "Until the time of the agreement with Abitibi Consolidated, little forestry work was done because the land is considered very sacred," says Elaine Jourdain, co-management co-coordinator for the First Nation's own natural resources department. For example, when the men are working in the forest, they offer tobacco as part of a traditional ceremony. So, when Abitibi Consolidated Inc. wanted to log on land near the reserve, there was a two-way educational process that had to take place. Learning sessions helped Abitibi officials realize the meaning of stewardship for the Lac La Croix First Nation. At the same time, visits to the operational areas where cutting was in progress were organized for community members to learn about forestry practices. Through the reciprocal educational process, a mutual trust was developed. "We are still in the process of negotiating a forest management plan with Abitibi," explains Jourdain.

Lac La Croix signed a five-year working agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in June 1994. The agreement meant Lac La Croix would co-manage land in the Namakan area, west of the reserve, with Abitibi Consolidated Inc. "It was meant to create sustainable development for the First Nation and to preserve and protect the area surrounding the reserve," explains Jourdain. "The company has had to consult with the First Nation much more than in other areas because of the agreement."

A steering committee was formed with three members of the First Nation and three members from Abitibi Consolidated Incorporated. The committee signed a memorandum of understanding in February 1997. Then it was time for the First Nation to participate in developing a forest management plan. "We had to ask ourselves questions such as how should we go about extracting trees and when would our community principles and values be at stake. We also had to look at what the Elders were saying and at our own economic reality," says Jourdain. "Some of our members are still hesitant about all this. We have to really look at ourselves and weigh our principles and values against the values of economic profits. We will have to decide which areas to harvest and how to create the best situation."

Over a three-year period from 1996-1997 to 1998-1999, Lac La Croix First Nation received a total of $95,100 in funding from the First Nation Forestry Program. Some of the FNFP funding was used to train a First Nation technician from the community in collaboration with Abitibi Consolidated Incorporated. The technician, Cheryl Ottertail, sat on the steering committee and worked closely with

the company employees. "She was involved in timber cruising with them," says Jourdain, "and they came to work with her in the community. It was quite a positive collaboration."

According to Rick Greet, Canadian Forest Service, Sault Ste. Marie, the venture was the perfect opportunity for the First Nation community to get involved in local area forestry. "The company approached the Elders, and many had a negative, preconceived idea about the whole thing, but they met and got to know each other's perspective on forest use, needs, and opportunities. Then the company offered the community a partnership to manage an area with some specific traditional use sites the First Nation would like to protect."

According to Greet, "The FNFP assisted the community in being an equal partner. The FNFP also paid for negotiation costs on the community side. This was an excellent example of what a program can do to facilitate partnerships."

"During this whole process much learning occurred for both community members and Abitibi representatives. As the forest management plan is being further developed, all that has been learned about each other's needs, practices, and beliefs will have to be incorporated," says Jourdain.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$95,100
FN and Other	$106,000
Total	$201,100

For further information, please contact:

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Lac La Croix First Nation
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Forestry Program, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, Ontario

At the turn of the century, the people of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve of Manitoulin Island, located between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, attempted to develop a forest management plan. They were not successful.

Today, however, a forest management plan is in place, managing the band's resources to ensure they remain available to future generations.

According to Michael Eshkawkogan, forestry manager for the band until early in 2001, "The reason for the lack of success in earlier years was a lack of education." Eshkawkogan is a forest technician, a graduate of a two-year training program and now has many years of practical experience. Many of the permanent and seasonal full-time workers involved in the plan's implementation were trained on the job.

Eshkawkogan loves his career. "I like the forest. I wanted to study and come home and help the community. It's important to see into the future and leave something for our children and grandchildren," says Eshkawkogan. "We are building the forest for our kids. The ultimate goal is to become self-sustaining."

The forest management plan now in place has been achieved through support from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) and the opportunities it has facilitated for the community's forest operations.

It all began in 1989 when the Chief and Council set out to manage the band's forest resources. Eshkawkogan was initially hired for four months to do timber cruising. Until he left his job with Wikwemikong he was in the process of developing and implementing a forestry program that included a 20-year management plan and operating plans to be updated every five years. The last update was done in 1994. The band has now developed the next five-year operating plan for 2000-2005. The plans were developed through public consultation.

The band has its own Geographic Information System (GIS) to maintain an up-to-date forest inventory. "I think there is more awareness now in people. They now know we need to manage our resources. We promote such conscious thought. We hope people will think a little more now before cutting a tree. We try to incorporate our values into our forest management plan too. Other uses of the forest such as medicinal, recreational, and wildlife habitat are being respected and encouraged as well," says Eshkawkogan.

The Wikwemikong Forestry/Fish & Wildlife Department issues timber permits and monitors the activities that occur in the forest. "Only native businesses operate here," says Eshkawkogan. Several registered operators maintain the forest activities, each providing a service such as harvesting, trucking, silvicultural work, and cut and skid training. There is also a sawmill that produces rough lumber such as cedar to be marketed to the United States and Quebec markets.

Aboriginal businesses and operations provide a total of 60 to 80 jobs. Approximately half of these jobs offer year-round employment.

When Eshkawkogan and his staff first approached the FNFP for funding support in 1996, the Ontario Management Committee recognized the value of the work that the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve had accomplished in the past and the potential for both economic and sustainable forest management development in the future. Over five years, 1996-1997 to 2000-2001, the program provided $131,000. In accordance with the design of the FNFP as a catalyst for securing or generating revenue rather than being the sole source of funds, this contribution represents about 28 per cent of the total forestry project value over this period.

The FNFP provided funding to help the Wikwemikong forestry department explore and develop a wide range of economic and forestry opportunities. Some of these include the provision of funding to explore and negotiate partnerships and joint ventures with private forest industry companies, including the lucrative market of value-added secondary manufacturing of timber products. Business planning support for on-reserve harvesting, log-home construction, and sawmill operations are other worthwhile projects that have been supported.

Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve has a secondary forest made up of 30 per cent poplar and white birch, 40 per cent eastern white cedar, 20 per cent hard maple, and 10 per cent white spruce and white pine. The current land base is 42,500 hectares, 80 per cent of which is productive forestland.

In 1998, an additional 13,750 hectares was awarded in a land claims settlement. This area, located on the mainland, consists of 4,000 hectares of the settlement lands that once belonged to the Point Grondine First Nation. Point Grondine First Nation amalgamated with Wikwemikong in 1968. The Point Grondine land base includes 60 per cent white pine, 20 per cent hardwood, such as maple, and 20 per cent spruce and poplar. "The additional 13,750 hectares gave us more land to oversee and manage. With funding support from the FNFP we also conducted an inventory to see what is there and developed a plan through public consultation," says Eshkawkogan.

Wikwemikong now has a total population of 6,000 residents. Point Grondine does not contain a major settlement.

Eshkawkogan also worked closely with the community's young people in school programs such as career days, and annual tree-planting activities. "People are in favour of looking after our resources," he says. He also took an active part in the production of short informational videos, television shows, and articles in the Wikwemikong newspaper.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$131,000
FN and Other	$341,000
Total	$472,000

For further information, please contact:

John Manitowabi
Wikwemikong Fish & Wildlife Department
Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve
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The Skeetchestn Indian Band is No Stranger to Forestry, British Columbia

Since the mid-1950s, the Skeetchestn Indian Band has been actively involved with forest management activities on their reserves that are located west of Kamloops, near Savona.

For over 10 years, the Skeetchestn Band has been particularly active carrying out silviculture activities both on and off their reserves. Band members worked on surveys, juvenile spacing and pruning. Historically, band members have relied on fishing and hunting as the major source of food and have kept a close inventory on these resources for generations. Members of the band still use a multitude of non-timber forest resources for food, medicinal and structural materials in their everyday lives. However, they are now also dependent upon the timber resource as a source of employment and economic growth.

In 1996 the band applied for a provincial woodlot licence to manage and harvest. A woodlot licence allows the band to access a portion of provincial Crown land to be managed together with a portion of reserve forestland. The combined areas make up the total working woodlot forest area. Having this tenure provides the Skeetchestn Band with an opportunity to increase the actual area of their working forest by combining about 557 hectares of provincial Crown land to their reserve working forest area. With the financial support of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), the band successfully applied for and was subsequently granted a woodlot licence. Following approval of the licence, the FNFP assisted financially with developing the forest management and operational plans, plus field forestry training for two band members. As a result, these trainees are now qualified to complete more of the actual technical forestry work such as surveys, logging layout, and timber cruising that would have been contracted out in the past. With this tenure the band can now provide greater opportunities for its members to gain experience in field-based forestry activities including collection of field data, and cut block boundary and road layout work. In addition to collecting technical cruise data, the forestry trainees collected cultural heritage data in the areas of food, medicinal plants, fish and game, and camping locations.

As Mike Anderson, the band's forester, pointed out, "What was interesting about collecting the cultural inventory information was that the Crown land portion of the woodlot represents different ecosystems than what are found on the reserves. Therefore, a different variety of traditional plants are present in the vegetation. The inventory work also provided the crew with a more holistic understanding of the forest and the relative importance of traditional plant species. In addition, it has helped our technicians to develop, or look at alternatives to, the traditional methods of logging. The outcome of the work funded by the FNFP was that it offered an opportunity to use Crown land areas to educate younger band members in a broader spectrum of traditional plants and their uses, than what they were familiar with."

Another benefit of having this woodlot is that it has started the band towards developing a forestry-based business. They are looking to identify opportunities and provide direction for future silviculture and harvesting activities, both on the reserve and on their woodlot licence. The completed forest management plan has established the base information for managing their woodlot. An operational plan (which was also completed and approved by the Ministry of Forests) takes information from the management plan and sets out how they plan to carry out activities for the next 10 years. In developing the operational plan, the band was able to create a unique training opportunity for some members of the enhanced forestry crew under the supervision of their forester.

As Anderson explained, "We were able to train two band members in field data collection for an operational timber cruise. During this exercise they were able to collect sufficiently accurate data to submit for compilation in support of a cutting permit application for the woodlot. These band members also received specific classroom and field training in cut block and road layout. They were able to complete the field layout for two cut blocks, plus approximately three kilometres of roads."

An educational outcome of having a community crew being involved in all phases of woodlot management planning was significant. This broader training allowed the forestry crew members to develop an increased diversity of job skills that will provide them with more flexibility in terms of the types of jobs they are now qualified to do. They are no longer limited to spacing and pruning activities. Funding from the FNFP specifically helped with project administration costs, trainee field wages, management costs, minor equipment costs, and travel expenses. This has provided the band with a completed forest management and development plan for the woodlot, plus all of the fieldwork necessary for initial harvesting. For two young band members, Gabe Jules and Darrel Peters, this opportunity has provided them with useful training and skills that can be applied to other contract work. This work has also increased the Skeetchestn Band's understanding of forestry impacts, allowing them to make more informed decisions on forest management issues. As well, it has provided a base of traditional knowledge information that is being incorporated into their forestry planning.

In terms of overall forestry jobs created, the community has its own horse-logging crew that will carry out the harvesting. By using horses that are cheaper to purchase, operate and maintain than skidders, this will provide about 20 person weeks per year of logging employment, two to three person weeks for

loading and trucking, and two to three person weeks of technical forestry work. This horse-logging crew is also able to do a much more environmentally sensitive style of harvesting.

The band's forester explained that following the development of their woodlot, the band was successful in securing a 15,000 cubic metre annual cut forest licence for 10 years in partnership with Ainsworth Lumber Limited. This licence is anticipated to create 20 to 25 new jobs, with most of them going to First Nations. It is anticipated that there will be eight jobs in logging, six jobs in milling, and two technical forestry jobs that will be created, plus various jobs in trucking, administration, and value-added forestry products.

The community capacity building doesn't end there because recently the band started a Natural Resource Education Program for grades 10 to 12. The Skeetchestn Band already has a successful long-term partnership with Simon Fraser University (SFU) in post-secondary education. Through SFU they have established the Secwepemc Education Institute (SEI) and have developed a proposal to establish a post-baccalaureate training program in Environmental Resource Management. This will complement the needs of the community's youth because the program provides an opportunity for people to more easily ladder into different aspects of forestry management, providing more opportunities and flexibility respecting education for the community's youth.

Anderson summed up what it means to receive this type of financial support for forestry training. Anderson said, "The FNFP training was a good building block because out of this training the young people in the community are beginning to recognize one thing, and that is that they need to have an education if they want to move forward with their lives."

In 2001 the FNFP provided $23,420 in funding to the Skeetchestn Indian Band to survey and inventory traditional plants and other significant cultural features on more than 1,000 hectares of forestland within their woodlot licence.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$73,120
FN and Other	$16,040
Total	$89,160

For further information, please contact:

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Forester
(250) 373-2493

CATEGORY 2:

BUILDING SKILLS/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

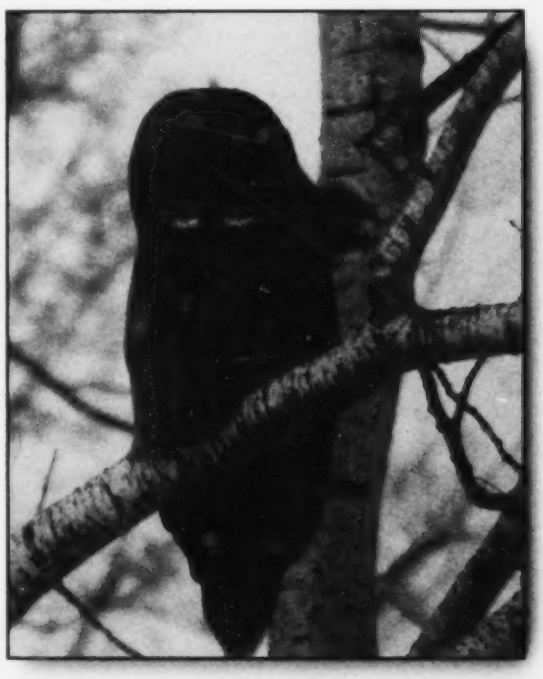
Opitciwan Forestry Service: Source of Employment and Training for the Members of the Opitciwan Community, Quebec

Founded in 1992 by the Opitciwan Band Council, the Opitciwan Forestry Service (OFS) attends to the improvement of socio-economic conditions in the Opitciwan community by drawing upon its strength from the community's two major assets: the experience of the local work force in forestry and the proximity of the forest.

The proximity and abundance of the natural resource and the numerous power transmission lines on the territory are all features and natural components of the Opitciwan territory that have made it possible for the OFS to complete several types of silvicultural projects for partners in the forest industry since 1992. The OFS has also undertaken another form of development of its expertise. It has been entrusted with the mandate to supply the Opitciwan Sawmill Limited sawmill, a joint venture partnership with Donohue. It goes without saying that these projects will expand the expertise and number of regular employees at OFS, which also offers accommodation services in the village for workers and other individuals from outside the area during their stay in Opitciwan. Since 1998, the main activity of the OFS, in addition to its silvicultural activities, is to provide wood for the sawmill.

The main activities and achievements of the OFS in 1998 can be summarized as follows:

- reforestation (3,100,000 seedlings)
- pre-commercial thinning (1,100 hectares)
- release cutting (200 hectares)
- power line clearing
- forest road system (15 kilometres class 2, 12 kilometres class 3)
- housing accommodations (100 persons)
- harvesting of woody material (54,000 cubic metres)
- commercial thinning (23,000 cubic metres)



At the peak of its silvicultural projects in 1998, the OFS employed 90 employees, four of whom were non-native people working on a regular basis from spring until first snowfall. Of these employees, 58 were assigned to tree planting, 72 to thinning, seven to projects associated with housing accommodation, and three to company administration. In 1997-1998 the OFS received $21,400 from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) for training silvicultural workers. At that time the total project value for OFS was approximately $311,900.

Since the inception of the FNFP in 1996, OFS received close to $160,000 for the implementation of training, communication, forestry activities, and the preparation of a business plan.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$150,450
FN and Other	$621,372
Total	$771,822

For further information, please contact:

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First Nations Increase Involvement in Wildland Firefighting, Alberta

Aboriginal Albertans have a long history of participating in firefighting efforts in the province. With many First Nation communities located in prime forest fire zones, it has always been customary and prudent for band members to join firefighting efforts in their territory whenever the need arises.

When the Province of Alberta introduced a new hiring system a few years ago that required training and certification for Level I and II firefighters, many First Nation communities saw this as an opportunity to train band members and establish professional firefighting crews. In 1998 and 1999 the Alexander, Beaver Lake, Driftpile, Fort McMurray, Paul, and Sunchild First Nations received a total of $111,400 in funding from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) to train band members as Level II wildland firefighters. What was once a sporadic job choice became a dependable summer job option for dozens of First Nation band members and an economic development opportunity for their communities.

In Alberta there are three levels of wildland firefighters. Level I crews are the first to a fire with the highest level of training and experience. Level II crews arrive next to offer support to Level I crews in many areas of fire suppression. Level III firefighters mop up the fire scene when the other crews are finished their work. Salaries for firefighters are based on training and certification levels, with Level I being the highest paid.

In the past, firefighters waited to be called out by the Alberta Forest Service to fight fires on an as-needed basis. During the past few years, many First Nations have established their own Level II crews and contract their services to the province for the full fire season.

Fire season usually runs from April to October in Alberta. The majority of Level II contracts are between 60 and 120 days, mainly during the period May through August. Each First Nation that has crews available negotiates a contract with the province to provide firefighting services for the season. Crews can be called to fires anywhere in the province, and on occasion, be sent to other provinces to fight fires.

In 1998 and 1999, six First Nation communities in Alberta offered Level II wildfire firefighting training to band members with the support of the FNFP. The training took approximately three weeks and included basic firefighting techniques, and industrial and safety training. Graduates are required to pass a written and physical test before receiving their certificate that enables them to work on a band-operated crew.

Russell Whitford, economic development and human resource manager for the Beaver Lake First Nation in North Eastern Alberta, coordinated the training for his band. "The training program was a success for our band. It's the first time that we've put together professional crews with training and certification," says Whitford.

"The support from the First Nation Forestry Program for the Level II training was important to making this program the success that it has been over the past two years. We trained 19 community members with the FNFP funding and as a result we were able to create good paying jobs."

Whitford said the training and employment opportunities that were created have had a significant impact on the community. Eighty per cent of the trainees were youth, and two were women. Two crew members have decided to pursue Level I wildland firefighting training, and others have used their training to enter related forestry and resource-based industries.

"The project has met our expectations from both an employment and practical business experience perspective. We're confident that the program will continue to grow in the future," Whitford said.

The Driftpile First Nation was another one of the six communities to receive FNFP support in 1998-1999. The training program was launched in January 1998 and resulted in the establishment of one eight-person Level II crew.

According to John Giroux, Driftpile's Band Administrator, the training program has had a positive impact on employment in the community as well as on the motivation level among crew members. At least one crew member is pursuing Level I firefighter training, and others have moved into arborist and forest technician programs as a result of their experience on the Level II firefighting crew.

"The support fr[illegible]he First Nation Forestry Program helped op[illegible]e door for our community to a new emplo[illegible]ent opportunity," said Giroux. There con[illegible]s to be a very high interest among community members in firefighting training and jobs."

The Driftpile Level II crew completed a 90-day contract in 1999 with the goal of securing contracts from the province of Alberta for many years to come. To ensure that First Nations continue to have a stake in firefighting contracts in the future, and to help develop positive relations between First Nations and the province, Giroux organized a workshop, funded by the FNFP, in Edmonton in March 1999. The goal of the workshop was to initiate communications between First Nations and the Alberta government in the area of certification, contracts, and training requirements.

"It was important that the province hear the concerns of First Nations relating to their firefighting policy and certification in the province," Giroux said. "We need to have a voice in future changes and the criteria of the program. First Nations have well-trained individuals and a knowledge base that comes from generations of living and working in the forests."

Giroux said that the goal of the Driftpile First Nation is to create year-round employment for the firefighting crews. "There is every opportunity to make a profit in this field. Our vision is to become more involved in the forestry sector in areas like regeneration and silviculture, which will extend the employment season for band members."

Judging by the growing number of individuals with Level II certificates and the strong interest among bands to enter the contracting business, the future for firefighting careers appears to be heating up.

In 1998-1999 the FNFP contributed $111,400 towards wildland firefighter training in Alberta. The total project value was $271,700.

Firefighter training continued in 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, with significant additional contributions from the FNFP and

its partners. Twenty-two additional training projects were approved for funding in this follow-up period. An additional $464,732 was contributed to wildland firefighter training projects by the FNFP in Alberta, with an additional $920,132 from First Nations and other funding sources. Furthermore, a workshop was also successfully organized to coordinate and bring together First Nations from across the province to discuss concerns related to fire suppression.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$576,132
FN and Other	$1,080,432
Total	$1,656,564

For further information, please contact:

Councillor Herb Arcand
President
Alexander Forestry Services
(780) 939-5887

Log Houses Go Up in Berens River, Manitoba

The Berens River Reserve is a small community located in northern Manitoba. While working in the forest business for 10 years, Brian Kemp, project manager for the Berens River First Nation, was troubled when he saw large timber being used only for paper production. To demonstrate to the local paper mill that large trees could have alternative uses, a log meeting lodge was built on the reserve. The building illustrated that large timber can be used to develop value-added products, and not just for pulp production.

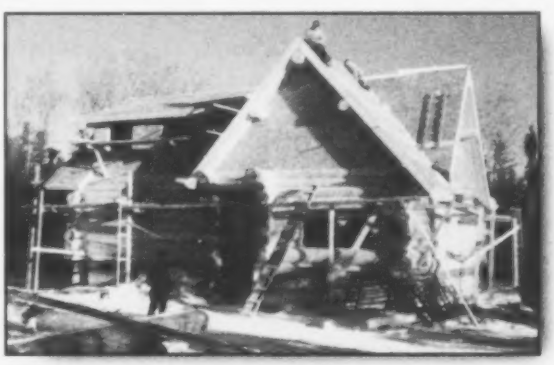
For two years the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) provided financial assistance for the Berens River First Nation project. Six people were trained in log house building and up to 20 students were involved over the summer months. "They built a lodge out of logs. It required peeling, scribing, and craning the logs to erect them. It was a fairly involved and costly process, but now six people are well-trained to do more," says Michael Newman, Canadian Forest Service, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Kemp and his brother Hector were sent to a log home building course in Minnesota for 10 days in the spring of 1998. They returned to the community to begin work on the lodge with the help of log home building veteran Ron Desruiseau, an expert with 20 years of experience.

The team spent eight weeks training on log work and eight weeks piecing the roof together, "the trickiest part of building the lodge," said Kemp. Then they closed it in and added the doors and windows. "There is a lot of labour involved in log work," he added.

Today, the first 2,200 square foot, bungalow-style building is complete. Structurally it boasts a cathedral ceiling, walk-out terrace, and a 1,000 square foot deck. By burning and carving pictures of wildlife and other outdoor scenes into the logs, the interior blends log work with traditional native art, creating a style unique to log building. The building is currently being used as a fishing lodge. Six additional fully contained cabins with log siding have been built along the Berens River. The log work of a second building is now complete, "It's only a 1,488 square foot structure, but the design is much more detailed than the first lodge," says Kemp.

Through FNFP funding, the Berens River First Nation hired 10 people, including Kemp to run the project. Kemp and his colleagues were also sent to Edmonton to display a model of log houses and promote their abilities. Four of the trainees completed the second building.



"Even though these buildings will cost about $125 per square foot to complete, the project has been important for this isolated community where most things cost at least 20 per cent more than in the city," says Kemp. "The program has helped young people from the community build their skills. Some of them have even moved on to hold other construction-related or forestry jobs."

Kemp himself has reaped some personal benefits. "I was a logger for 10 years and a tree planter. I have always been involved in forestry. Now, I have learned how to manage people," he said.

"Today we are at a point where we have completed the log building program for Berens River, and there are plans for the development of a sawmill for the community. We would eventually like to build a network of similar lodges in the surrounding area so that we can develop a good tourism base."

The FNFP contributed a total of $104,000 in funding towards the Berens River First Nation log-building project with other contributions of $231,136.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$104,000
FN and Other	$231,136
Total	$335,136

For further information, please contact

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Berens River First Nation
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Building Forest Capacity for Nak'al Koh Logging, British Columbia

The Nak'azdli Band Council (formerly Necoslie) has 16 reserves in central B.C. located adjacent to Fort St. James. The band has been involved in logging in the past, and has become increasingly successful in the industry over the last six years. They currently own and operate Nak'al Koh Logging Ltd., which has been active in logging during this period. The company was developed to carry out logging and silviculture activities on the band's Timber Sale Licence.

In addition to their logging company the band also owns a forest company named Nak'al Koh Timber Ltd., which was formed and incorporated solely to obtain a value-added forest licence from the Ministry of Forests (MOF). They were awarded this licence in 1995, but although they had been successful in accessing fibre resources, the band has had to rely on outside non-Native and non-local help to do the work while they continued to build their capacity to develop the licence.

The band also had an ambition to pursue multi-year, multi-phase pre-harvest contracts for the MOF, but lacked some of the specialized skills that were needed, most notably the expertise of a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) who must meet formal university education and experience requirements. While an RPF can be hired for this type of contract, the band decided they wanted to pursue further training and build forestry capacity within the band. The desire to undertake this type of contract proved to be the impetus that was needed, as the band administration felt there was no reason the band members could not be trained to do this work.

With assistance from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) in 1998, Nak'al Koh Logging secured the services of Forey Management Ltd., a forest consulting company. Forey Management assisted the band in acquiring and completing pre-harvesting contracts and training band members to successfully manage and complete future contract work.

The band entered into a five-year joint venture agreement with the company, with a primary goal of phasing out the consulting services as the experience and expertise of band members increased. The long-term goal is to provide full-time career opportunities for band members. It was the intention that Nak'al Koh Logging Ltd. would be able to provide forest management services using trained band members for the Band Council's own Timber Sale Licence, as well as provide contracting services to the Ministry of Forests, and other forest companies.

"The assistance of the First Nation Forestry Program helped us purchase field equipment, and increase our capacity by attending forestry training courses," says Dean Prince, Crew Supervisor for Nak'al Koh Logging and member of the Nak'azdli Band. The training courses included Life Skills, General Forestry Orientation, Global Positioning Systems, Traversing, Timber Cruising, Boundary and Road Layout, First Aid Training, Culturally Modified Tree Assessment, Terrain Stability Assessment, and Stream Classification.

Beginning in 1998, three band members received on-the-job training in road and block layout, timber cruising and other pre-harvest work on a contract with Forey Management. This crew also successfully completed a multi-phase pre-harvest contract for the MOF.

It was clear after the first year that the FNFP-sponsored training had gone well, noted John Mosiman, Chief Financial Officer of Nak'al Koh Logging Ltd. They now had three trained First Nations members who could carry out technical office and fieldwork in the areas of global positioning, timber cruising, and boundary and road layout.

In 1999, all three members of the original crew returned with the addition of another trainee. The focus of that year's field season was the continuation of on-the-job training, as well as specific training for a crewmember to become a supervisor. The crew successfully completed three independent contracts - two multi-phase and one timber cruising contract for Nak'al Koh Logging. They also assisted on various other contracts that Forey Management was implementing.

"Instead of being stuck doing a single task, this training has allowed me to do multiple tasks such as supervising, silviculture prescriptions, mapping, layout, global positioning work, and timber cruising, which makes the job more interesting," says Prince, who was one of the trainees.

Ultimately, the summer of 2000 field season was a success, as the crew ran more independently with less supervision from Forey Management. Furthermore, two members of the crew were still employed through Forey Management, and Prince, having obtained his Diploma in Forest Technology, was continuing in school to attain his Bachelor of Science in Forestry Degree. His plans were to become a Registered Professional Forester.

The Nak'azdli Band is now firmly planted in the forest industry, providing members with training in a number of areas, from silviculture to supervisory positions. Consequently, Nak'al Koh Logging is now able to work on a variety of contracts while continuing to build forestry capacity through further education for band members.

In the year 2000 Nak'al Koh Logging received $25,000 in FNFP funding to support further technical forestry training for five people. This training either added to previously learned skills or provided new skills for some. Overall it helped with both academic and work pursuits of the trainees.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$64,145
FN and Other	$286,323
Total	$350,468

For further information, please contact:

Les Huffman
Woods Manager
(250) 996-7171

Resource Management Personnel Program, Saskatchewan

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations provided training for six Aboriginal Integrated Resource Management graduates to assist them in obtaining jobs. The one-time project focused on a specific area of need. In the future, a similar work experience program might be offered in another field.

The initiative was a collaborative initiative between the federal and provincial governments (Strategic Initiatives) during 1997-1998, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM), and the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP).

Originally, 24 Saskatchewan Aboriginal students graduated from an Integrated Resource Management program offered by Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC). Established in 1993, SERM, Canadian Forest Service, and the forest industry were instrumental in providing employment for the first few summers.

The Resource Management Personnel Program (RMPP) was developed later. The one-year program offered by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations was designed to bring the students' knowledge to a new level, according to program coordinator Gordon Iron. "Here, they receive specialized modern training such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer mapping systems training, and traditional cross-cultural training from First Nations' Elders." Firearms safety, fire suppression, and enforcement training for parks are also tackled. "Overall, this is a program to help these people get full-time employment," says Iron. "Many of them do not have adequate experience or only work seasonally."

In 1999, the RMPP went into full-time status. Participants initially worked with the provincial government in departments such as wildlife, lands, parks, fire protection, and forestry. The RMPP staff now work strictly out of First Nation government offices. "In this way, they will be able to see both perspectives of forestry and other management issues," says Iron.

Working at Saskatchewan tribal councils will allow graduates to explore issues such as traditional land use from an Aboriginal perspective. "Working for the government will improve their technical skills," says Iron. "It also encourages a positive liaison between First Nations and the provincial government."

By the end of the program, it is anticipated that the provincial government will hire some participants, and others will find positive opportunities in industry or with First Nations. Because funding is limited, this is expected to be a one-time program that will help close the skills gap. The rest of MLTC's graduates have already secured jobs in government, private industry, or with First Nations. Of the six students trained, four are still employed by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, one has set up a consulting business, and the final student is working with his band.

"This creates an awareness for First Nations people. They could become role models to ensure others might pursue an education that will lead to employment. Also, this is creating a working relationship between the provincial government and First Nations. In the future I hope we will be able to face each other eye-to-eye on a technical basis. We will have our own professional teams to study environment and resource proposals," says Iron.

The FNFP contributed $27,000 towards the RMPP program in 1997-1998.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$27,000
FN and Other	$0
Total	$27,000

For further information, please contact:

Gordon Iron
Meadow Lake Tribal Council
(306) 236-5654

The North Thompson Indian Band is 'sharp' when it comes to sawmilling, British Columbia

The Simpcw people for which the North Thompson Indian Band's (NTIB) forestry company is named, are part of the Secwepemc or Shuswap people. They speak the Secwepemc language and have occupied the North Thompson River drainage and upper Fraser River areas for generations. Most of the 500 Simpcw people live on the North Thompson Indian Reserve of Chu Chua, just north of Barriere, B.C.

A number of band members work in forestry and are involved in activities such as sawmilling, logging, silviculture and Geographic Information System (GIS) work. The NTIB created SIMPCW Development Co. in 1991 as the corporate body to manage logging and sawmilling operations. In recent years, the band's logging activities stopped in favour of individual band members developing their own contracting companies. The NTIB used to be involved in silviculture contracting, but this has also been passed over to individual band contractors. Now the band assists logging and silviculture contractors to secure work with local forest companies and the B.C. Ministry of Forests. Currently, the SIMPCW sawmill employs 23 people on a two-shift operation.

A major boost for the NTIB towards developing their own forestry operations came in January 1999 when SIMPCW acquired a major forest licence. This licence allows harvesting of 53,000 cubic metres of timber per year for 10 years. One of the imposed conditions to operate this tenure was that the band must meet the requirements of the B.C. Forest Practices Code. In addition, the NTIB must employ a minimum of 17 people in their mill, and utilize an equivalent volume of logs in their sawmill, excluding any hemlock pulp grade logs. Given these harvest levels, the band anticipated that their sawmill would manufacture 40,000 cubic metres, or 10 to 12 million board feet of lumber per year.

Not only is the NTIB involved in logging and milling, but it also has a Natural Resources Department that secures contracts and operates silviculture, watershed management, and fisheries projects. They also own a GIS and a Global Positioning System (GPS) for which contracting services are offered. Their Natural Resource Department has a diversely skilled staff, and this strength has allowed SIMPCW to compete for various types of forestry contracts for the B.C. Ministry of Forests and for forest companies.

Chief of the NTIB, Nathan Matthew explains, "They do have a good GIS system, and they are trying to be contemporary when working with technology." As a result, their GIS department has secured both direct work, and contracts for companies to do GIS-related projects.

In 2000, the band mill produced between 30,000 and 34,000 board feet of lumber per day, providing 22 community jobs. When the band started sawmilling, they could only afford very old equipment. Having to operate a mill with old equipment was expensive in terms of repairing and replacing parts. Therefore, for the company to remain in

operation over the long term, the objective was to gradually upgrade the mill so that equipment repairs were not such a huge factor in mill downtime and high operating costs.

A major initiative for SIMPCW over the last two years has been to replace their circular saw with two new band saws. Switching to the band saw offered higher log utilization that makes the mill more cost competitive in the marketplace. SIMPCW also developed its own saw filing facility on site to reduce sharpening costs. This proved to be more cost effective, and created three new jobs for band members on the reserve.

"Since log prices have been very high, SIMPCW has had to develop higher utilization for all logs brought through the mill. Otherwise they simply could not make money," explains Chief Matthew. Milling using band saws is different from using circular saws, so with the conversion came a different kind of custom saw filing. The switch to band saws posed a challenge for the mill's operation because when SIMPCW switched to band saws they didn't have the proper sharpening equipment or trained personnel. Consequently, the dull band blades had to be transported many kilometres for custom sharpening, which was a significant cost to the operation. For example, one band saw was producing up to six dull blades a day and these had to be shipped by truck to the nearest saw filing facility—more than 200 kilometres away in Lac LaHache.

With funding support from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), SIMPCW was able to arrange for professional training in saw filing for three young band members, two of whom are enrolled in a saw filing apprenticeship program.

As Chief Matthew explained, "In order to keep a mill operation viable, it is a matter of putting the things in place that need to be in place," with respect to having proper mill equipment and trained workers.

The saw filing training program was supported with a financial training and equipment purchase contribution from the FNFP, plus training support from the Shuswap Training and Education Program (STEP). Prior to and after the saw filing course was completed, Gilbert Smith Forest Products Ltd. and Tolko Industries Ltd. accommodated the trainees for a two-week job shadowing program in their saw filing operations. At the mill, funds from the FNFP allowed SIMPCW to hire a trainer to provide on-the-job operational saw filing and benching training for the two band members.

Over both the short and long term, the company will see many benefits from this addition. The new saw filing operation is providing immediate employment for two band members, with plans to maintain three jobs over time. Once the trainees receive their certification in saw filing through the apprenticeship program, they will be able to train others. By having saw-sharpening skills, these band members will be qualified to provide custom saw filing services for other sawmills. Not only does this project benefit mill employees and band members, but it also extends to the logistics of running the sawmill. It will also reduce mill operating costs overall by reducing transportation costs, the risk of damage to blades during transportation, the amount of blade handling, and allowing the company to maintain a lower inventory of saw blades.

When Chief Matthew was asked if he would do anything differently he answered, "We would have gone into band saw technology sooner and would have accessed training earlier and more consistently." This project was a necessary step for the band to be able to continue developing their sawmill into a viable business while creating jobs in the community. Future goals include securing longer-term sources of fibre for the mill and eventually entering into secondary manufacturing activities.

In 2001 the FNFP provided $6,775 in funding to SIMPCW to produce a log supply and product diversification strategy report. This report assessed the current mill situation respecting SIMPCW's fibre supply, operations and markets. In addition, the report provided practical and attainable strategies that will lead the company's operations into short-term stability and long-term health.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$56,775
FN and Other	$122,869
Total	$179,644

For further information, please contact:

Nathan Matthew
Chief, North Thompson Indian Band
(250) 672-9995

Firefighting in the Yukon Territory

In the winter of 1999 the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) Management Committee met to discuss its agenda issues. From this meeting came a clear consensus for greater participation in fire management in Yukon. Training and recognized certification of more Yukon First Nation fire suppression crews was defined as one of the main mechanisms to achieve this goal.

Training was contracted to ensure delivery of the Yukon Initial Attack/Sustained Action Crewman course, leading to certification. The emphasis of the training was to ensure that upon completion of the course, the attendees were operationally prepared to go to work for the 1999 fire suppression season. The course was a success with a total of 29 people passing. Subsequently, the majority of graduates were hired on various First Nation and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) crews.

When the season began in earnest, Tintina Forestry Contracting hired 11 people from the training initiative as members of a call-up crew to work for Chief Isaac Incorporated, a company that controls all Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation business and has established local businesses to employ First Nations people. Other trainees were hired by their respective First Nation contract crews. Approximately 95 per cent of the trainees were hired throughout the 1999 fire suppression season in the field in which they were trained.

The 1999 fire suppression training, and the employment opportunities that followed, was such a success that there was an overwhelming demand by Yukon First Nations for fire suppression training for the year 2000 season.

The FNFP contributed a total of $41,000 for the training and certification of Yukon First Nation fire suppression crews.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$41,000
FN and Other	$11,000
Total	$52,000

For further information, please contact:

Brenda Richardson
Coordinator
Council of Yukon First Nations
(867) 667-7631

Lake Superior First Nations Development Trust, Ontario

Lake Superior First Nations Development Trust (LSFNDT), a non-profit organization, is making a difference in Thunder Bay by working to encourage Aboriginal people to tackle a career in forestry.

The LSFNDT continues to develop initiatives to encourage more Aboriginal youth to remain in school and to consider careers in forestry. The cornerstone of this program is Megwekob, an annual publication distributed across Ontario in 1999, 2000 and 2001 that raised awareness about Aboriginal forestry issues. Another publication is being planned for distribution in 2003.

The 2000 edition of Megwekob included articles on newly formed companies owned and managed by Aboriginals. Some are private companies, such as Sustainable Forests, owned by Roderick Wigwas, a youthful entrepreneur from Gull Bay First Nation. Others like Manitou Forest Products near Fort Frances and Whitesand Forestry outside Armstrong are community-based companies owned by First Nations communities. With the support of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) and other agencies, these communities and many other First Nations have established a variety of business initiatives in the following areas: non-timber forest products, traditional ecological knowledge, and ecotourism. Furthermore, many First Nations are developing silvicultural and harvesting operations that are making their presence felt in the industry. Featured articles in Megwekob 2000 included:

- the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Tree Nursery was constructed near Dryden, Ontario. Attending the opening ceremony was the Honourable Robert Nault, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The initiative was years in the planning and now enjoys the support of the major forestry companies in the area. The tree nursery is owned and managed entirely by First Nations.
- the First Nations House of Learning has an innovative program at the University of British Columbia that encourages Aboriginal students from across Canada to pursue careers in forestry.
- Ken VanEvery, a member of Six Nations, is one of the first Aboriginal people to graduate with honours from the School of Forestry at Lakehead University. He is currently working at KBM Forestry, a consulting firm in Thunder Bay, Ontario.
- Rainy River First Nation is this year's recipient of the Trillium Foundation's Caring Community Award. Rainy River First Nation was chosen for its community-based strategy of promoting economic development and protecting the environment.

The launching and development of the first issue of Megwekob in 1999 was financially supported by the FNFP. The idea of the magazine was generated, in part, from an earlier study that was initiated by the FNFP Ontario Management Committee. This study explored some of the barriers between First Nation communities and industry. One of the barriers identified — that was also influential in the development of Megwekob '99 — was the lack of educational support for First Nation graduates of forestry technical programs. The first issue of Megwekob '99 — The Aboriginal Resource Technician's Continuing Education Catalogue — assisted with addressing this gap.

The FNFP also sponsored the second and third editions and supported travel costs for the editor to participate in workshops and events to profile stories of interest to readers of Megwekob. Furthermore, in 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 the FNFP assisted LSFNDT with enhancing the services provided by their Geographic Information System (GIS) department. Funding was provided to purchase a Global Positioning System (GPS) and infrared Satellite Imaging (SI) equipment and software to allow LSFNDT to venture into a new segment of resource management services. Implementation of a GPS and SI allowed for the testing of new methods and ideas for GPS integration and utilization with their GIS, fire management services and fire crew protection capabilities. Other spin-offs included the development and enhancement of new and existing employment and educational programs and opportunities for Aboriginal people.

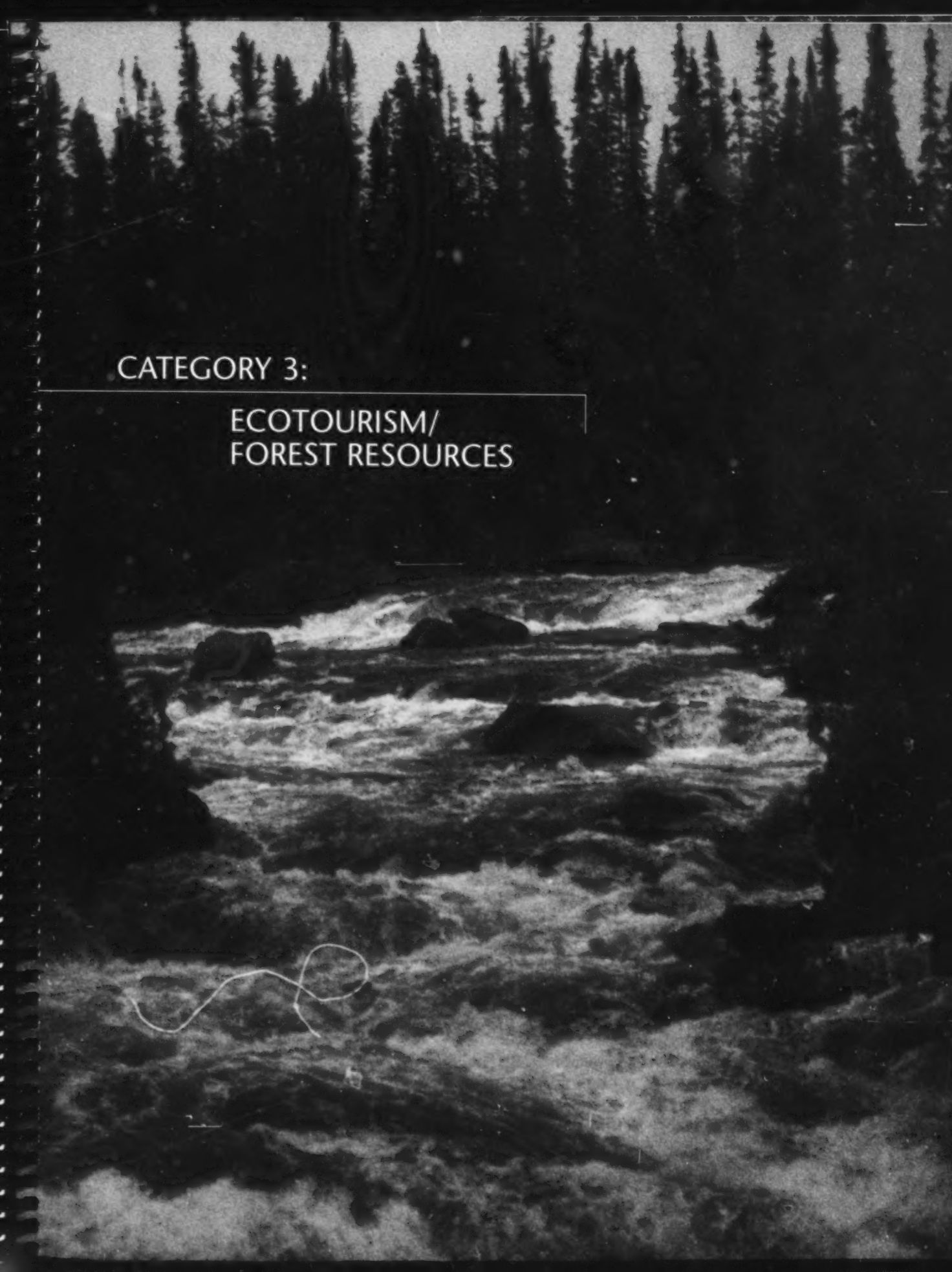
The FNFP has provided a total of $117,000 in support to the LSFNDT for Megwekob production, and website and on-line development, GPS and SI equipment and software, and Internet mapping services. The FNFP also partnered with the LSFNDT for printing administration of the 2001 Ontario FNFP newsletter.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$117,000
FN and Other	$102,500
Total	$219,500

For further information, please contact:

Jocelyn Smith, Programs Administrator
Lake Superior First Nations Development Trust
(807) 628-8330



CATEGORY 3:

ECOTOURISM/ FOREST RESOURCES

Land Lease to Support the Miawpukek Forestry, Newfoundland

The Miawpukek Mi'kmaq Band has operated and supplied its own sawmill for over two decades. It is now in the process of negotiating a long-term lease with the Newfoundland government for additional forest land to support a new sawmill that will be built on the reserve.

The Miawpukek Reserve is an area of 556 hectares at the head of Bay d'Espoir and the mouth of the Conne River. Records indicate Mi'kmaq people have lived here since the 1700s. The reserve name means middle river place. In a past project, a cultivated Christmas tree stand was developed. But the reserve area is small and cannot support economically significant forestry activities. The band is therefore pursuing a lease on 10,000 hectares with the province of Newfoundland. This land is located adjacent to the reserve and, with adequate management, will ensure the economic viability of the reserve's forestry operations in future years.

The project first involved the development of a forest resources business plan. Both the Miawpukek Band and the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) provided funding for the plan and additional silviculture work. "We brought together expertise in modern forestry and in traditional land use. We worked together and it proved to be a winning combination as band members are also aware of the local concerns," says Ian Millar from the Canadian Forest Service in Truro.

According to George Parsons, general manager for the band at the time, the forestry plan is vital to negotiating an agreement with the province, and the FNFP funding and consultation assistance was greatly appreciated. "We had to know the extent of the total forest resources we would have and the extent of work needed to undertake a harvest," he explains.

The forest plan is now complete, and the Band is in ongoing discussions with the Province on completing the lease agreement. The lease would allow the band to access more resources, which translates into more security for the new sawmill over the next 20 years. "Although we want to establish other ventures in our area, the band will continue with selective harvesting for the present time. We will focus on silviculture, including thinning and management of the Christmas tree areas for the next few years," says Greg Jeddore, the current forestry manager for Miawpukek.

From 1996 to 1999 the FNFP contributed $34,100 for the realization of the Miawpukek Band's goals. By 1998-1999 the total project value was $162,900, demonstrating a $143,700 increase since 1996-1997.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$34,100
FN and Other	$128,800
Total	$162,900

For further information, please contact:

Tammy Drew, General Manager
Miawpukek Mi'kmaq Band
(709) 882-2470

The Aboriginal Heritage Gardens, Eel River Bar First Nation, New Brunswick

In 1995, Chief Everett Martin of the Eel River Bar First Nation signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, for the development and implementation of Aboriginal heritage gardens. According to Tim Dedam, manager of economic development and tourism for the Eel River Bar First Nation, the idea was modeled on the North American Indian heritage garden Smithsonian concept—a boardwalk running through the site, bordered on either side by plants traditionally used by Aboriginal peoples. Over four years the community worked on a master plan for the site. Staff researched the plants and their relationship to the people carefully. "The community-based project was researched using the knowledge of the Elders," explains Dedam. "It celebrates the contribution of nature and plants to our medicines and food and to the spirituality of our society."

The site, located in Chaleur Park, New Brunswick, will feature an interpretive centre constructed from Douglas fir boards recycled from two World War II aircraft hangars. The site design is completed and actual construction of the buildings began in 2001.

"The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) assisted directly with the development of the land," Dedam states. "Fungi and other undesirable species and invasive plants were removed. Test plots of sweetgrass and other plants were sowed. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) helped map the overall site. Security systems were also implemented on the site to keep animals from eating the plants."

Plans were on paper by the spring of 1998. Trail construction began in the fall of 1998 and will run through to the site opening in the spring of 2002. There is a series of five trails, each with a distinct theme such as food, medicine, or spirituality, and one mixed trail that will also be wheelchair accessible.

The site will also include a parking lot, a reception area, an amphitheatre, and the main building, incorporating a cafeteria and gift shop.

Market studies indicate that 55,000 people will visit the site in its first year, but Dedam estimates actual numbers will greatly exceed this. Fifteen to 16 First Nation members will staff the site during the summer months. The tours will be available in Mi'kmaq, French, or English.

Over a three-year period the FNFP contributed $74,917 in funding toward the development of the Aboriginal heritage gardens. In 2000-2001 the total value of this project was $52,300.

The FNFP funding enabled the First Nation to leverage funds from other sources, which is very important in a project of this magnitude. "Funding by the FNFP was also very important as it allowed us to identify and control undesirable species, process our geographical information by hiring a GIS technician, and support and train other staff," says Dedam.

TOTAL FUNDING

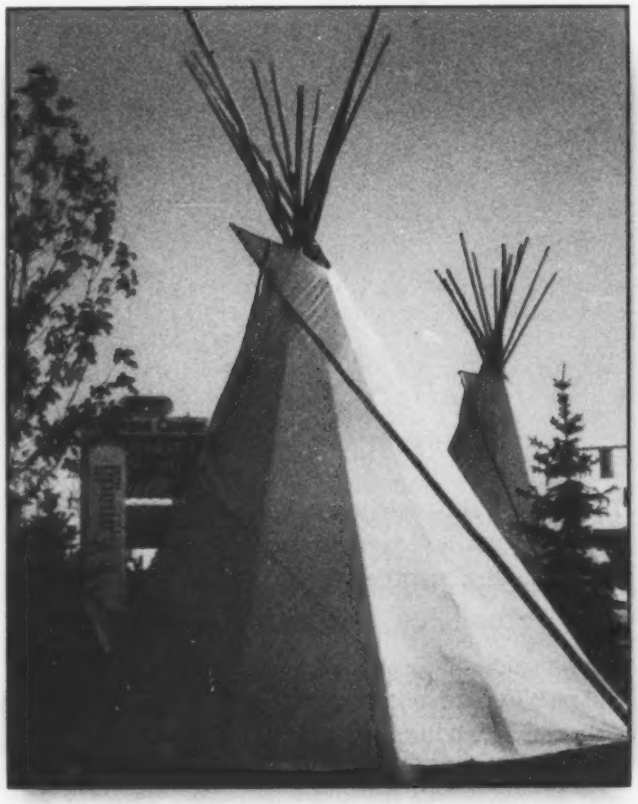
FNFP funding	$74,917
FN and Other	$40,000
Total	$114,917

For further information, please contact:

Tim Dedam, Manager, Economic Development and Tourism
Eel River Bar First Nation
(800) 394-4926

Mistawasis's Cultural Village, Mistawasis First Nation, Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's Mistawasis First Nation can now share a touch of their history and culture in the beauty of their natural surroundings. Visitors to Mistawasis Cultural Village can walk to reach the small, untouched natural area. There, they are able to spend the night in one of six teepees on the hill above Mistawasis Island Lake. Other activities such as bannock making are also available. The concept is part of the community's riverside tourism initiatives, which already include hiking trails and canoeing as well as an annual four-day powwow, starting at the end of July.



The Mistawasis First Nation is about an hour's drive from Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a place that draws a multitude of tourists each year. Many Europeans visit the area and are able to come to Mistawasis for a taste of the community's traditional Aboriginal culture.

There is a growing interest in Aboriginal culture among tourists and Mistawasis First Nation people alike, according to Les Pechawis, Cultural Village project coordinator. In fact, the Cultural Village project began with the support of community elders and as a result of a 1995 survey. "People are interested in our traditional way of life. The Elders want to share it, but not to exploit it commercially with draws like sweats and sun dances," said Pechawis.

The entire Mistawasis Ecotourism Project was initiated in three stages: the survey, a riverside clean-up of the area, and the establishment of the Cultural Village. A beginners' canoeing program, five miles of hiking trails, and a revamped beach and barbecue area are ready for tourists to enjoy. Teepees go up each spring in the Cultural Village. "There is a certain way to do it. We have Elders put them up," said Pechawis.

The project was funded with $77,700 from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), $48,000 from Pathways, and $14,105.76 from the Mistawasis First Nation itself. FNFP funding helped develop hiking trails that now extend around the lake.

The initiative creates jobs for tour guides and managers. People from the First Nation are employed. "We are not sure how many jobs just yet, but this will eventually be a year-round thing," said Pechawis.

During the summer of 1999, the Mistawasis First Nation hosted a traditional feast for a group from Japan, Hong Kong, and Korea. "We entertained them with traditional dancing, and a few of the band members dressed up in native regalia and rode Indian ponies bareback down the trail. It was very colourful, and our visitors were excited and impressed to see this event. The group enjoyed their short stay, and many photos were taken," said Pechawis.

The Mistawasis Ecotourism Project is in full operation. Pechawis said that the teepee village, hiking trails, and canoe expeditions were in operation in the summer of 2001. According to Pechawis, "The Mistawasis Education Board has a Cultural Village in operation as we speak. This is where Elders teach our youth the survival ways of life such as hunting and trapping, speaking their own language; just more or less how to survive in the wilderness."

The Mistawasis First Nation is very enthusiastic about their Cultural Teepee Village. The project provides a chance for Elders to proudly share their traditional culture with residents and visitors alike.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$77,700.00
FN and Other	$62,105.76
Total	$139,805.76

For further information, please contact:

Leslie Pechawis, Project Coordinator
Mistawasis First Nation
(306) 466-4800

Skatin and Xa'Xtsa First Nations Use the Past to Build Bridges to the Future, British Columbia

When Governor James Douglas of the Hudson Bay Company ordered a road to be built along the Lillooet River from Port Douglas at the head of Harrison Lake to Mount Currie in 1858 to access the newly-discovered Cariboo gold fields, the Skatin (Skookumchuck) and Xa'Xtsa (Douglas) First Nations had lived in the forests along the river for thousands of years. They concentrated along the river corridor and numerous trails throughout the region fishing, hunting and gathering food.

Over the years, the original trails, as well as the 1858 Cariboo Wagon Road, have been affected by other road construction in the Lower Lillooet River valley, including the present In'SHUCK'ch Forest Service Road. The Wagon Road was abandoned in 1864 when the Fraser Canyon Road from Yale to Lillooet was completed. However, there are still sections of the original trails and Wagon Road that remain virtually unchanged. The European historical resources are identified and protected under the Harrison-Lillooet Gold Rush Trail Management Plan, but the First Nations cultural resources were largely unidentified.

Each of these First Nations now finds their traditional territory in relative isolation, with many members living in urban centres in the Fraser Valley. In order to rebuild their communities, they recognized the need to establish an economic base to draw their people home. It seemed logical to try to do this through their close ties to the forest and the historical significance of their territories. Hunters and fishermen currently frequent the valley, as do tourists seeking either the numerous hot springs in the valley or the gold rush era historic sites such as Port Douglas.

Eco-tour operators in the Whistler/Pemberton area had started to take note and express interest in the area, while the absence of signs and designated access points had led to incidents of trespass and vandalism of both First Nations cultural resources and damage to remaining buildings or other artifacts of the Gold Rush Trail.

In 2000-2001, the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), provided funding to each of these First Nations to undertake a preliminary archeological reconnaissance of the trail corridor, reconstruct and rehabilitate portions of the trail after community consultations, and construct and erect appropriate signage along the existing logging road in conjunction with the Ministry of Forests Squamish District Office staff.

In total, approximately 20 kilometres of trail/wagon road were surveyed in August 2000 by an archeologist familiar with the area and representatives of the two communities. The trail sections were physically walked and First Nations historical locations, such as culturally modified trees, pit house pits, and fishing locations along the river, were mapped. Portions of the trail were identified as suitable for both protecting and developing historically important First Nation and European sites.

The trail alignment, designated access points, and features to be protected were clearly mapped. The Xa'Xtsa and Skatin Communities then reviewed the plan in detail and had it approved by their respective Councils. The B.C. Ministry of Forestry's District Manager also approved trail improvements and signage on Crown land.

Through September and October, crews from each community worked on their sections of the trail, cutting brush and saplings, removing windfalls and dangerous snags, and improving some of the stream crossing structures. This work provided employment for community members who were able to upgrade their forestry skills. It gave the crew foremen additional opportunities to provide leadership to their crews while developing their own management and reporting skills. The communities, with the Chiefs and Councils, provided the guidance and vision for the project, but the foremen provided the passion that was needed to complete the hard physical labour required.

Signs were erected that conformed to District-wide Ministry standards and had a First Nations flavour with traditional carvings on the sign uprights. The Ministry worked with the communities and their elders to develop appropriate wording and First Nation names for signage and brochures that met with the desires of the communities.

Eventually, these communities hope that in conjunction with their neighbours, Samahquam and Lil'wat First Nations, they will be able to ensure they maintain the network of cultural and historical sites within the Lillooet River valley. Meanwhile, this initial ecotourism management/forestry recreation project has allowed the Skatin and Xa'Xtsa communities to improve the stewardship of the cultural and forest resources under their direct control and consider in an orderly way how they should use the available resources for improved community economic development and employment opportunities.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$49,882
FN and Other	$20,000
Total	$69,882

For further information, please contact:

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Forester
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Ecotourism, Lennox Island First Nation, Prince Edward Island

On Lennox Island, a small island on the northeast side of Prince Edward Island in Malpeque Bay, ecotourism is the top priority.

With its 560 hectares of woodland on reserve, the area is not large enough for a conventional forest-based business. Therefore, the people decided to explore the idea of ecotourism. According to Ian Millar, with the Canadian Forest Service in Truro, the band would be able to tap into the province's large tourism industry and protect its historical and cultural environment at the same time. "The variety of species, birds, and other flora and fauna of this beautiful place are definitely good draws," he says.

The idea of ecotourism was first explored in 1996. A consultant was hired to prepare an initial business plan for the project. The plan involved activities such as developing trails to intersect with various points of interest on the island. For example, in one area there are trees that were damaged by an ice storm and now have unusual shapes. Millar says such a spot could provide children with a spontaneous challenge to their imaginations. The seasonal provincial flower (the lady's-slipper), blue herons stalking their catch in the shallow waters, and other wonders of nature should also captivate the adults.

The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) originally consulted with the Lennox Island First Nation to help identify the ecotourism opportunity, and has invested $26,200 so far in developing the idea. By 1998-1999 the total project value was $62,000, an increase of $57,000 from 1996-1997.

According to Charlie Sark, Lennox Island First Nation Band Chief at the time of the project, the initial business plan was too vast and has now been revised. The proposed hotel was too expensive and would have destroyed valuable green spaces. Instead, the project will focus on benefiting from the natural environment. " We decided to downscale the plan," says Chief Darlene Bernard, current Band Chief. "We will use some existing roads for paths. We don't want to harm the forest; we want to restore it. We will go from there." Some proposed trails are expected to be open by next summer. Limited interpretive tours and kayak and canoe tours are now available and expansion is anticipated as demand warrants.

"The project will be community-driven," she explains. The owners of four businesses in the small community—a general store, craft outlet, ceramics factory, and trucking firm—are excited about building up the tourism industry, but they also want to keep the initiative manageable and retain the character of their small community.

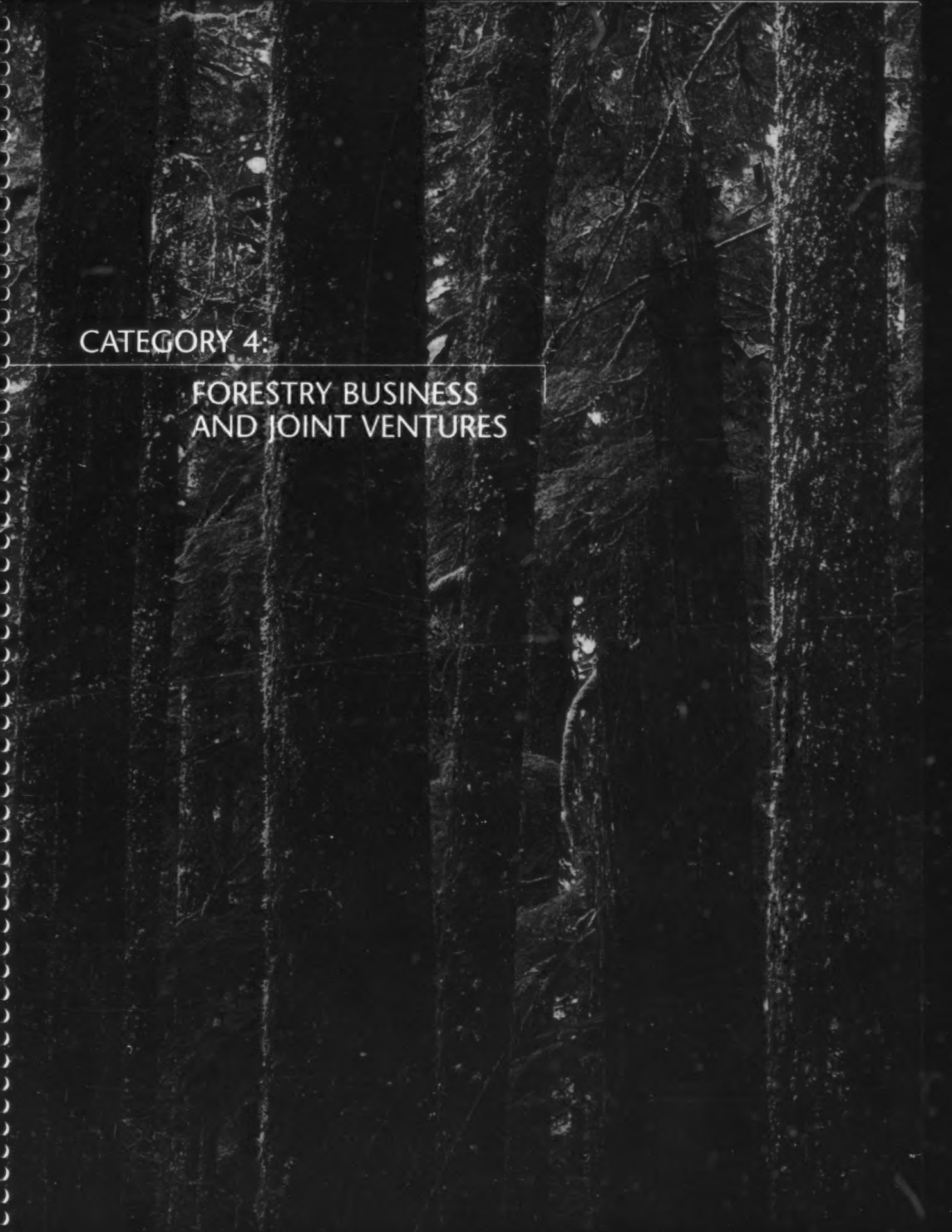
"The FNFP funding was essential to make this ecotourism plan a reality," says the Chief. "Now the community will continue to develop and fine-tune this alternative forestry project, allowing the forest to develop in peace."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$26,200
FN and Other	$35,800
Total	$62,000

For further information, please contact:

Chief Darlene Bernard
Lennox Island First Nation
(902) 831-2779



CATEGORY 4:

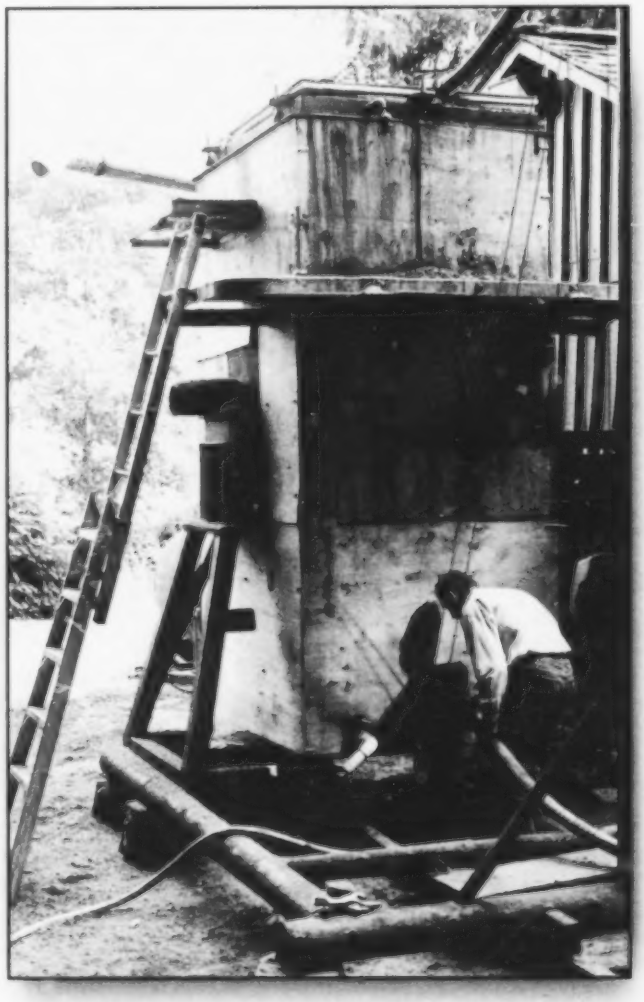
FORESTRY BUSINESS AND JOINT VENTURES

Tree of Life Essential Oil: A New Form of Value-Added Product, British Columbia

The forests around the Kwakiutl village of T'sakis (Fort Rupert), near Port Hardy on the northeast coast of Vancouver Island, have always provided shelter, transportation and clothing to the people of the village. When Gloria and Foster Roze decided to start their own business, it was natural that it would be tied to the forests surrounding their home.

The "Tree of Life Essential Oil" business was established in 1998 to produce a value-added cedar leaf oil product. Essential oils are concentrated aromatic oils found in plant leaves, flowers, seed, bark, roots and rinds of some fruits. Cedar essential oil has been processed from eastern cedar (Thuja occidentalis) and western red cedar (Thuja plicata) for over 100 years, although eastern cedar is more widely accepted. These oils are used as bonding agents and preservatives in a variety of products including pharmaceuticals, industrial soaps, pet shampoos, insecticides, furniture polish, room fresheners, candle fragrances and perfumes.

"Many coastal First Nations people call the western red cedar the tree of life because of its numerous gifts, including shelter, transportation and clothing," explains Gloria Roze. "By utilizing the cedar in our business, there is a strong link to cultural traditions."



The Rozes utilize cedar boughs harvested along roads and rights of way within the Port Hardy/Port McNeill area of northern Vancouver Island. They have harvesting agreements with both Western Forest

Products Ltd. and BC Hydro. The boughs are cut using loppers so that a small amount of foliage is left on the end of the branch stub. It is hoped that the branches can be sustainably harvested again within four to five years.

As Gloria notes, "The harvesting work is hard, physical labour and the weather doesn't always cooperate, but the employees enjoy the satisfaction of working outdoors with the smell of the freshly cut cedar."

The essential oil starts to evaporate from the boughs as soon as they are cut, so Foster tries to have them processed within 24 to 36 hours after harvesting. The boughs are chipped and then the chips are steamed in a pressure-cooker for about six hours. The steam containing the oil is passed through a cooling system that allows the oil to separate from the condensed water. The used chips are removed from the cooker and utilized around the village as bark mulch for gardens.

It takes about one tonne of branches to produce 10 kilograms of oil (one barrel holds about 180 kilograms), but the boughs can only be harvested from late spring to early fall, when the concentration of oil in the leaves is highest. As a result, the Rozes found it difficult to cut enough boughs to produce commercial quantities of oil without any other employees and difficult to hire other employees without a cash flow. That's where the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) helped the situation.

Initial marketing assistance was received from Community Futures of Mount Waddington, but once the viability of the production process was established in 1998, the Rozes realized that their limited production abilities on their own made it impossible for them to produce enough oil to be able to successfully market their product internationally. The FNFP provided funding in 1999 of $24,960, which allowed Tree of Life to hire five individuals from the Fort Rupert Reserve. These band members worked at various times between April and October 1999 to assist in the harvesting and processing of the essential oil.

"The First Nation Forestry Program provided the foundation for Tree of Life's long-term strategic plan to enhance economic opportunities and develop job opportunities in an area which was totally dependent on the fishing, logging and mining industries. With the closure of a local mine and downsizing in the fishing and logging industries, the North Island has a higher than average unemployment rate. This affects everything in a community as small as ours. This funding helped to improve Tree of Life's ability to increase its operational output of cedar oil, while providing employment for community members from the Fort Rupert Reserve," says Gloria.

Tree of Life produced over six barrels of oil in the summer of 1999, and with this increase in production capacity, the Rozes were able to concentrate more on developing markets and buyers for their product. By late October, they had sold four and a half barrels (more than 800 kilograms) of oil, and were preparing for initial meetings with representatives of a Japanese company that was very interested in testing the compatibility of Tree of Life's product to a similar oil produced in Japan. Tree of Life quickly established a reputation of commitment to quality, trust, honesty and fair trade.

The FNFP funding also made it possible for Gloria to extend her energies in new directions and leave the "heavy stuff" to Foster and the guys. She established a new venture called "First Nations Soap and Candle Works," which also uses cedar leaf oil in some of the products. This venture created another part-time job.

Hasa is an important Kwakwah word, which simply translated means "spiritual breath" or ancestral breath. The business philosophy of Tree of Life Essential Oil shows the importance to Gloria and Foster Roze of bridging the traditional cultural values with modern business practices:

Tree of Life Essential Oil is not only about economic development; it is also about respect for ourselves and Mother Earth, job creation, pride and humility, and value-added processing. It means sharing, and most importantly, it means being environmentally responsible. With these values in mind, we are taking responsibility to control our destiny in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Ancestors. Combined with the hasa of our ancestors, we believe that small business initiatives can empower individuals and communities to grow in a healthy manner.

The Rozes have continued to expand Tree of Life Essential Oil at a slow and steady pace since this project was funded, and continue to provide employment opportunities to local residents. As the non-timber forest products industry continues to expand in British Columbia generally and on northern Vancouver Island specifically, it is clear that Tree of Life Essential Oil will continue to be part of that growth in the Port Hardy area for some time to come.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$24,960
FN and Other	$54,236
Total	$79,196

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Nooaitch Indian Band Launches Log Home Building Business, British Columbia

Entrepreneurial ventures are nothing new for the Nooaitch Indian Band of Merritt, British Columbia. The 120-member band is a shareholder in a successful Day's Inn Hotel as well as an accounting and computer service company. The creation of Eagle's Nest Log Industries Inc. in 1998 was a natural business development strategy for a band that holds a woodlot license, has a waiting list of band members needing housing, and is preparing to develop a 23-lot subdivision.

The decision by the Nooaitch Indian Band to launch a log home building business fulfilled many of its long-range goals, according to James Fountain, the band administrator. "Our goal is to increase job opportunities in the forest industry in the Nicola Valley, not only for the Nooaitch but for other bands as well," Fountain states. "We're also committed to improving housing conditions for our community members."

In 1998, the band conducted a feasibility study for developing a log home building venture. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the company could be financially viable and if there was potential to attract a joint venture partner.

An important element in expanding its involvement in the forest industry is the band's recent award of a 15-year, non-renewable small wood timber sale license. This tenure is in addition to their existing 400-hectare woodlot license. In 1998 then-Chief Linda Chackelly and Councillors Lana Clydesdale and Clifford Shackelly recognized the need to develop a venture that would provide added value to the wood harvested from their territory. "Some of the trees we harvest will be used in the log home building business instead of being sold as raw logs," notes Fountain.

The idea for the business was influenced by the fact that there are 40 Nooaitch families on the waiting list for housing. The company hopes that many of the houses built on their new 23-lot subdivision will be log homes constructed by Eagle's Nest Log Industries Ltd. "The first log houses we build will be for band members who qualify for traditional mortgages," Fountain said. One local bank has already started accepting applications for construction loans from individual band members.

Securing a small wood timber sale license and launching a log home building venture are significant steps for a band with only minimal experience in the forest industry. While a few band members have worked in harvesting and silviculture jobs for non-Aboriginal companies, Eagle's Nest represents a major step towards band involvement in the industry.

Even before conducting the feasibility study, the Nooaitch First Nation was anticipating entering the forest sector. In 1998 the band coordinated a log home construction training program with the support of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation youth initiative, the Interior Salish Employment and Training Society, and a Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) training program. Among those trained to build log homes were three Aboriginal youth and four displaced forestry workers. Trainees came from as far away as Prince George to learn chainsaw use, falling and bucking, first aid, and log home construction.

In 1998 Eagle's Nest Log Industries Ltd. received $6,000 in support from the First Nation Forestry Program to complete a log home construction feasibility study. "The support from the FNFP for the log home building training and launching the business was essential to the development of the company," Fountain says. During 1999-2000 the FNFP contributed $23,913 toward essential log home building equipment, marketing, and product export training.

So far the company has built a 750-square-foot cabin, a 1,500-square-foot house, sheds, and picnic tables made out of lodgepole pine. When the company is fully operational, it will employ a staff of eight, including a seven-person crew and a business manager. The band expects some local business and employment spin-offs such as construction, logging, and trucking subcontracting. In 1999 Eagle's Nest Log Industries entered into a joint venture with Esh-kn-am Investments, an economic development company owned by four Thompson bands, including Nooaitch.

David Walkem, Chief of the Cook's Ferry Band and one of the principles of Esh-kn-am Investments says, "We see Eagle's Nest Log Industries as a good long-term investment for Esh-kn-am. The company will create jobs and build houses for people in our community. There's also the potential for the company to sell its products on a national and international level."

The Nooaitch Indian Band sees a bright future in the forest industry. "We'll continue with the log home business, and we're looking at the idea of starting up a sawmill at some point," Fountain comments. The company has developed a marketing brochure and had a booth at Nexus '99; a national Aboriginal business trade show held in Vancouver in July.

Meanwhile, Eagle's Nest Log Industries is starting to get a name for itself in the Nicola Valley. "We've had some people come out from Merritt to look at the house that we're building and inquire about our services," Fountain says. Despite the potential for outside growth, the company intends to address the needs of its own community members first. Eagle's Nest has established its priorities, at least for the present, according to Fountain. "For now, we're going to focus on building log homes for band members, before we start exporting off reserve."

One thing is clear: the Nooaitch Indian Band's decision to launch a log home building venture could not have come at a better time for the 120 members of that community.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$29,913
FN and Other	$13,378
Total	$43,291

For further information, please contact:

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Forest Operations for Wahnapitae First Nation, A Major Leap Forward, Ontario

The residents of Wahnapitae First Nation (WFN) have been working hard to establish themselves with respect to forestry-sector activities. The WFN is an Ojibway community of 300 members (50 on-reserve residents), located 60 kilometres north of Sudbury, Ontario. "We didn't have any expertise in the forest industry at all," says Peter Recollet, Lands and Resource Technician. "The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) funding was what we needed to help us start understanding what our forest resources are. We began to develop some options with respect to the best way to manage our resources and the type of assistance we need."

In 1997, WFN submitted a proposal to the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) to prepare a 20-year management plan and corresponding business plan for the reserve and community. The members of the Ontario Management Committee (OMC) were pleased to support the initiative, on the basis that the FNFP recognizes First Nations are often at different levels with respect to the development of forestry capacity. The OMC also realized that there were some potentially lucrative business and partnership opportunities for WFN in the future. In 1998, the FNFP contributed funding to support WFN in their efforts to establish partnerships with the local forest industry and to explore forestry business ventures.

Wahnapitae First Nation is one of five First Nations that have signed partnership agreements with Vermillion Forest Management Inc., (VFMI - the license holder for the Sudbury Crown Management Unit), Tembec Inc., and the Municipality of French River. The agreement of understanding was signed in September 1997. "It was on a small scale, involving tree planting, stand tending, tree marking and other types of silviculture, but we knew these activities would not sustain all five First Nations," says Recollet. It was at this point that Wahnapitae First Nation looked at coordinating the forestry activities for the partnership agreement activities on behalf of the other First Nations involved.

In 1998, Tembec's mill in Alban, Ontario, burned down and the company decided not to rebuild it. The five First Nations approached the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) for access to harvest the wood allocated to this mill. OMNR requested that the five First Nations work with Vermillion Forest Management Inc. to come up with a joint proposal on how the wood should be allocated. Another stakeholder also emerged representing the laid-off workers from the former Alban mill. "We started negotiations with the three parties and, through funding provided by the OMNR, brought in an independent facilitator (Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association) to help reach an agreement," says Recollet. The first order of business was to identify the needs of each party.

"I saw an opportunity to work with Tembec on their overlapping license with VFMI," says Recollet. Within an eight-month period an agreement was reached and signed by the First Nations and Tembec in August 1999. "We never lost sight of our main objective to become a shareholder of VFMI and to secure access to Crown timber." The partnership agreement provides the five First Nations with an opportunity to harvest 19.8 per cent of the Sudbury Crown Management Unit. "It has been a major leap forward in Ontario, " says Recollet, one of the principal negotiators of the agreement. "I am proud that we

were able to negotiate a deal that would benefit everyone involved." Recollet acknowledges with thanks the other members of the negotiating team: Michael Eshkawkogan - Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, Cory Restoule - Dokis First Nation, Ralph Young - Whitefish Lake First Nation, and Ray Kakagens - Henvey Inlet First Nation.

A forestry corporation was established to administer the forestry contract, and has held workshops for harvesters, road builders, transportation, and other community personnel from all five First Nations. The purpose of the workshops is to share information and help each partner understand the level of experience in each community and the types of training and certification needed. "There are differences between the methods used by harvesters on Crown land and those used on First Nations land. We clearly identify the harvesting methods that are applied to specific areas," says Recollet, "because in order to be a truly sustainable forestry operation, the harvesters need to understand all phases of forestry."

The second phase involved establishing a work plan for the timber harvesting, road construction, and training of First Nation harvesters under Crown land harvesting guidelines. "We selected a training area on Crown land," says Recollet, "and completed an inventory of human resources and equipment." Tembec also allocated one of their foresters to work with the First Nations on implementing and managing the operations.

On April 1, 2000 the five First Nations entered into preliminary negotiations around the process to be followed for the First Nations to become shareholders of Vermillion Forest Management Inc.

Recollet and others at the Wahnapitae First Nation office also planned initiatives for their on-reserve forestry program. One idea being considered is to establish a birch bark supply business to other First Nations, as there is an abundance of white birch trees on the Wahnapitae First Nation reserve. "We have been approached by the Ojibway Cultural Foundation to supply birch bark for the production of arts and crafts, but in order to practice sustainable management we need to look at ways to properly harvest birch bark without killing the trees." WFN has also examined the feasibility of establishing a commercial operation for the production of white birch syrup and sugar. "Another objective we have is to upgrade the forestry education and training of our people," says Recollet. "We have people enrolled in the Forestry Program at Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario."

The forestry activities of Wahnapitae First Nation are just now being developed. "There is so much more to doing business in the forestry sector, such as assessments, surveying, and road building. We have many plans for the future" says Recollet. "What we have done so far is just the beginning."

The FNFP contributed $30,000 towards forest operations for Wahnapitae First Nation.

Recollet feels that the support of the FNFP has been extremely beneficial. "A good relationship developed and it has been a win-win situation for all parties," says Recollet. "In this business we all have to work together."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$30,000
FN and Other	$81,000
Total	$111,000

For further information, please contact:

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The Forestry Sector of the Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council: Serving the community and their clients, Quebec

The Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council has been active in the forestry field since 1995, thanks to the involvement of a sector specifically dedicated to this area of economic activity within the actual structure of the Band Council. The Montagnais Council offers services for carrying out forestry work and professional forest services. Since 1992, several projects have been completed off-reserve: power line, right-of-way maintenance, re-vegetation, pre-commercial thinning, and deforestation. In the area of professional services, deforestation studies and sensitive area inventories have been carried out on behalf of Hydro-Quebec. The Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council forest sector employs more than 60 seasonal workers and manages more than $1 million in annual revenues.

List of achievements:

1992-1993: 104 kilometres of deforestation, stacking, burning, and recuperation of 50,000 cubic metres of wood on the right-of-way for Hydro-Quebec.

1995: maintenance of the line right-of-way stretching over 719 hectares, re-vegetation, fertilization, and seeding over 104 kilometres of the right-of-way of the twelfth line for Hydro-Quebec.

1996: pre-commercial thinning of 370 hectares for Donohue, maintenance of the line right-of-way stretching over 529 hectares, and provision of damage service to these lots of land.

1997: pre-commercial clearing of 500 hectares, maintenance of the line right-of-way stretching over 520 hectares, undertaking of a professional study to provide a sensitive areas inventory for hydro-Quebec, and provision of damage service to these lots of land.

1998: pre-commercial thinning of 569 hectares for the Donohue corporation, maintenance of the power line right-of-way stretching over 539 hectares for Hydro-Quebec, undertaking of a deforestation study and a sensitive areas study for Hydro-Quebec, deforestation of the future site of the Alcan plant in Alma, and provision of damage service to these lots of land.

Over the years the Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council has developed its expertise in forestry. The procurement of a $290,000 deforestation contract for the future site of the Alcan plant in Alma is the culmination of several years of effort for the Montagnais Council forest sector, as they seek to carve out an important position in these competitive markets. Furthermore, in 1992, the Montagnais workers were able to tackle another daunting challenge head-on: the complete deforestation of Hydro-Quebec's line 12, a project costing more than $6.5 million, brought to comple-

tion in a manner respectful of the environment and work safety.

Projects and objectives:

In the year 2000, the Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council began a project to carry out commercial thinning of 1,100 hectares while harvesting approximately 15,000 cubic metres of wood annually, along with other pre-commercial thinning operations of 700 hectares, and line maintenance. Since the main objectives of the Council's forestry sector are job creation and the training and development of the workforce, all the necessary resources for expansion of this sector of activity have been implemented. In the context of its community vocation, and in an effort to build a profitable firm at the service of its clients, the Montagnais Council has conducted an exhaustive economic analysis of its forestry sector since 1995 to become better acquainted with the employment benefits, training costs, and workforce development. A projection of the statement of income and expenditures until the year 2000 was carried out, as well as a human resources development plan. This projection had work very well for the income but less for the expenditures. Following this development plan, a three-year training program was prepared to allow for improved management, financing, and overall forestry operations production, focusing on variety and volume, with constant concern for customer satisfaction.

The Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council has participated in the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) since its inception. It has received contributions of close to $200,000 from FNFP for the preparation of a business plan, the implementation of training activities and technology transfers and for studying the creation of a silviculture company that hires members of the community.

In 2001-2002, with a budget of $46,800, the Lac-Saint-Jean Montagnais Council went a step further and designed a study to harmonize the Montagnais's standards in forestry with the provincial standards. They did this by analysing the forest stands according to the Montagnais's standards, providing analyses and recommendations concerning the wildlife habitat, meeting the administrator of the land, and mapping the harmonized measures developed. This study will permit them to exploit the forest while respecting the Montagnais's activities in the area.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$175,178
FN and Other	$1,121,805
Total	$1,296,983

For further information, please contact:

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Community Development Corporation Venture Re-opens Corry Lake Nursery, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan Golden Lake, Ontario

When the Canadian Forest Service's Petawawa National Forestry Institute closed in 1996 due to government downsizing, its tree nursery closed down too — but not for long.

The Makwa Community Development Corporation of Pikwakanagan Golden Lake took on the venture and re-opened it as the Corry Lake Nursery.

By the spring of 2000 the first harvest of trees was ready to be lifted from the nursery beds and shipped to the buyer. According to a report from Makwa Community Development Corporation development officer and Corry Lake Nursery project coordinator Bonnie Sarazin, all the trees that year were sold and good progress has been shown since then. "Things are looking good," says Sarazin.

"There is a big demand," says Sarazin. "With the closure of most of the provincial tree nurseries, a big gap was left in the tree nursery market. The forest industry in Ontario in the past has even been shipping trees in from B.C."

Makwa became aware of the nursery opportunity in the fall of 1996. The former nursery on Corry Lake, located on the boundary of Canada's oldest research forest, the Petawawa Research Forest, had been abandoned. It had dry labs, a boardroom, and four to five hectares of outdoor nursery beds. The nursery was equipped with greenhouses, irrigation systems, tractors, and other equipment.

Makwa then responded to a First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) call for project proposals for funding in 1996-1997. In January 1997 two forestry technology students started on the project. A third trainee joined them in mid-February. During that year when the trainees were not working on the nursery operation, they assisted the five remaining Canadian Forest Service workers with forest management activities. The students received additional training in areas such as firefighting, first aid, and CPR, according to Dave Lemkay, former communications manager for the Petawawa Research Forest, Natural Resources Canada.

"Makwa has a five-year agreement, with the option to renew in five years," says Lemkay. "And it's a great opportunity. The tree seedling market in Ontario has changed a lot in the past few years. The province has few tree nurseries left. Traditionally, the Ministry of Natural Resources did all the forestry management and renewal. But that has changed. Now it's supply and demand. There is a very

strong seller's market. The time couldn't be better to be in this business."

Sarazin knew the project would be a challenging undertaking right from the start. After all, the nursery had not been operational for three or four years. "We had to sort through their old records, tidy up, see what was there, and start from scratch to figure out how we would get started," says Sarazin.

They put in the first crop in the spring of 1997. Then the weed nightmare hit. "Because the site had not been used in so long, we lost two compartments (four-acre fields) and part of the third," says Sarazin. Seven summer students from Golden Lake helped with the weeding, and transplanted each tree from the breeding hall by hand, a tremendous job. Because of the weeds, the nursery found itself a year behind schedule.

Corry Lake Nursery now employs workers and a nursery manager on a full-time, year-round basis. The workers are members of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan Golden Lake. On a seasonal basis, more community residents are also employed to help sell trees, prepare the site, plant in the spring, and weed the site in the summer. "This is a community-owned business," says Sarazin. "When we began to turn a profit in 2001, the money was reinvested into other Golden Lake ventures. We hope to start other community-owned businesses and provide further employment for our people."

Lemkay stresses that the nursery helps to train more First Nation people in nursery tasks. "But these people have been valuable to our own Canadian Forest Service operation as well. While the trees are growing and there is little to do, they come and work for us. We have hundreds of research sites and plantations. Here they prune and trim, perform marking, and do general access road maintenance. There is no shortage of general maintenance work."

The Makwa Community Development Corporation has been involved with the FNFP from the program's inception in 1996. Over a four-year period, the FNFP contributed $155,000 in funding for the Corry Lake Nursery operations.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$155,000
FN and Other	$719,100
Total	$874,100

For further information, please contact:

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Makwa Community Development Corporation
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Cote, Key and Keeseekoose First Nations Join Forces in Project, Saskatchewan

Thanks to a co-management initiative, three neighbouring Saskatchewan First Nations are more involved in the management of their land and have more members working in the local forestry industry.

Pepaw Management Inc. is a collaboration of the Cote, Key and Keeseekoose First Nations. The management company has trained a total of 36 people from all three communities in tree planting. They all worked for Saskfor MacMillan Ltd., planting 200,000 trees over a 12-day period on three sites between the Hudson Bay and Swan Plains. "The company is also training people in silviculture," said Michael Newman of the Canadian Forest Service in Prince Albert.

"First Nations people work with tree planting contractors in the area. It's a great way to increase First Nation involvement in forestry," Newman added.

"The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) provided top-up funding to get the project going two years ago," said Newman. "Now Pepaw Management Inc. has a good nucleus of skilful tree planters ready to take on the task each year. The work is mostly seasonal, but it is a start, and working with long-established forest companies is a good way to be exposed to the various facets of the forestry business."

According to Fred Quewezance, Pepaw Management project coordinator, the management group began in 1995. The group approached the government to designate approximately 600 square miles of traditional territory for the three bands, which are west of Duck Mountain Provincial Park and south of the Porcupine Forest. "We have hunted, trapped, and gathered in this area for years, but we had to prove we were here before it was developed," explained Quewezance. "This was accomplished by a year of interviews with elders and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping."

Another important step for these three First Nation partners was to sit with the province and local businesses to have Aboriginals represented on fire crews, employed in provincial parks, and employed during the summer in Duck Mountain Provincial Park. For example, six to seven summer jobs were obtained for reserve residents at the park, in spite of the fact that the three reserves have a combined population of nearly 6,000 residents. Fifteen reserve residents also worked on a logging contract for Saskfor MacMillan Limited.

While attractive, the growing access to logging jobs for First Nations did not make for unanimity among the members. The Elders, speaking for the traditional values of their communities, indicated that their people should not continue to be involved in logging in the area because it had already suffered greatly at the hands of loggers. Now the focus of Pepaw's plan is on tree planting and silviculture. "Our forests have been extensively harvested, and we are asking the province and industry to help restore them," explained

Quewezance. "We see our involvement in this as our chance to look after Mother Earth the way she has looked after us for so many years."

Fred Quewezance is a member of the Keeseekoose First Nation, and makes most of the decisions for the company. His main mandate is to protect the Pepaw Plains area and create some jobs for First Nations people. "We never had that sort of involvement around here before. The management initiative is a good step in co-existence. Now the province and local businesses know we are around."

Over the period 1996-1998 the FNFP contributed $37,000 to Pepaw Management Inc. for training.

The FNFP funded the group's logging effort and assisted in tree planting by providing much needed equipment such as spades. They also helped train people in a life and job skills program. Between 60 and 70 per cent of participants are now working in the forest industry. "At times we had no place else to go. I tip my hat to the FNFP. It has been a great help and support to us. It has really done something for these communities," concluded Quewezance.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$37,000 /
FN and Other	$185,348
Total	$222,348

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Developing an Aboriginal Forest Industries Council, British Columbia

In British Columbia there are at least 217 forest-related businesses owned by First Nations and that number is expected to increase exponentially over the next decade. These businesses have common concerns unique to Aboriginal forestry that will best be heard if represented by a single voice. Hence, the Aboriginal Forest Industries Council (AFIC) was developed to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal forest industry businesses.

The Management Board of the B.C. First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) recognized the need for an organization to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal forest industry business and established a sub-committee, the Forest Opportunities Working Group to investigate the level of interest in such an organization. The working group was comprised of members from First Nations, the B.C. Ministry of Forests, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Canadian Forest Service. It queried 283 bands, tribal councils, forest industry businesses, governments and individuals in British Columbia on forming an advocacy group. Results indicated that 90 per cent of those surveyed were interested in developing such an organization. In February 2001, representatives from Aboriginal forest companies and communities met with federal and provincial governments at a workshop to discuss the development of AFIC.

"The overwhelming consensus at the workshop was that AFIC is needed to establish a supportive and collaborative climate for new and existing aboriginal forest businesses," says Nello Cataldo, Collaborative Forestry Program

Manager at the Canadian Forest Service, Pacific Forestry Centre and member of the FNFP Forest Opportunities Working Group. "The objective is to develop an Aboriginal council in B.C. that will represent First Nations business interests in provincial forest industry forums."

AFIC will not only act as a united voice on behalf of aboriginal forestry companies, but will also serve as a networking and technical resource centre for both established and emerging businesses to share technical information, obtain assistance, or advise about business development, planning, and operations.

"It will be an opportunity to learn from each other, says Ron Matthew, a First Nations independent contractor in Barriere, B.C., and member of the FNFP Forest Opportunities Working Group. "For example, by talking about my experiences in setting up my business, I may be able to help someone understand some of the steps that are required. And I could learn about what did or didn't work for other businesses which may help me make decisions in my own business."

Besides networking, AFIC could provide or coordinate training, consulting, marketing, purchasing or any other forest-related activity that its members decide upon. It is expected to focus on capacity building and will address issues with province-wide implications such as working with governments to create business opportunities within traditional territories, communicating with the non-Aboriginal corporate sector to form viable partnerships and joint ventures, and promoting potential markets and trade within Canada and internationally. AFIC will protect First Nations' interests in botanical forest products for medicinal, spiritual and nourishment purposes, and will promote sustainable land use management including developing forest products certification for culturally sensitive forest practices.

Membership in AFIC will include First Nations tenure holders and potential tenure holders, existing joint ventures and First Nations businesses, value-added industries and wood processing groups.

"Membership will include any aboriginal business involved in any forest-related business ranging from botanical forest products to sawmills," says Gordon Prest, First Nations Forestry Coordinator at the Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia and member of the FNFP Forest Opportunities Working Group. "Once AFIC has had time to build up its membership, structure, and business constituency, it will be independent and self-governing."

Adds Cataldo, "Although the concept was initiated and supported through the First Nations Forestry Program, AFIC is to be an independent body with its own elected executive. The FNFP Forest Opportunities Working Group has been acting only as the pro-tem Board of Directors until an executive council is elected

to formally launch the organization and continue to build and carry out the mandate."

During 2001-2002, through support from the FNFP, AFIC was registered as a non-profit society that will be apolitical and have no involvement with issues such as land claims. Much of the year's work involved recruiting members, completing a strategic plan, determining the organization's goals, as well as organizing and delivering its first annual general meeting. Short-term goals included being financially self-sufficient, developing a high profile throughout the province, increasing its membership, and becoming a well-respected professional organization.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$30,000
FN and Other	$53,000
Total	$83,000

For further information, please contact:

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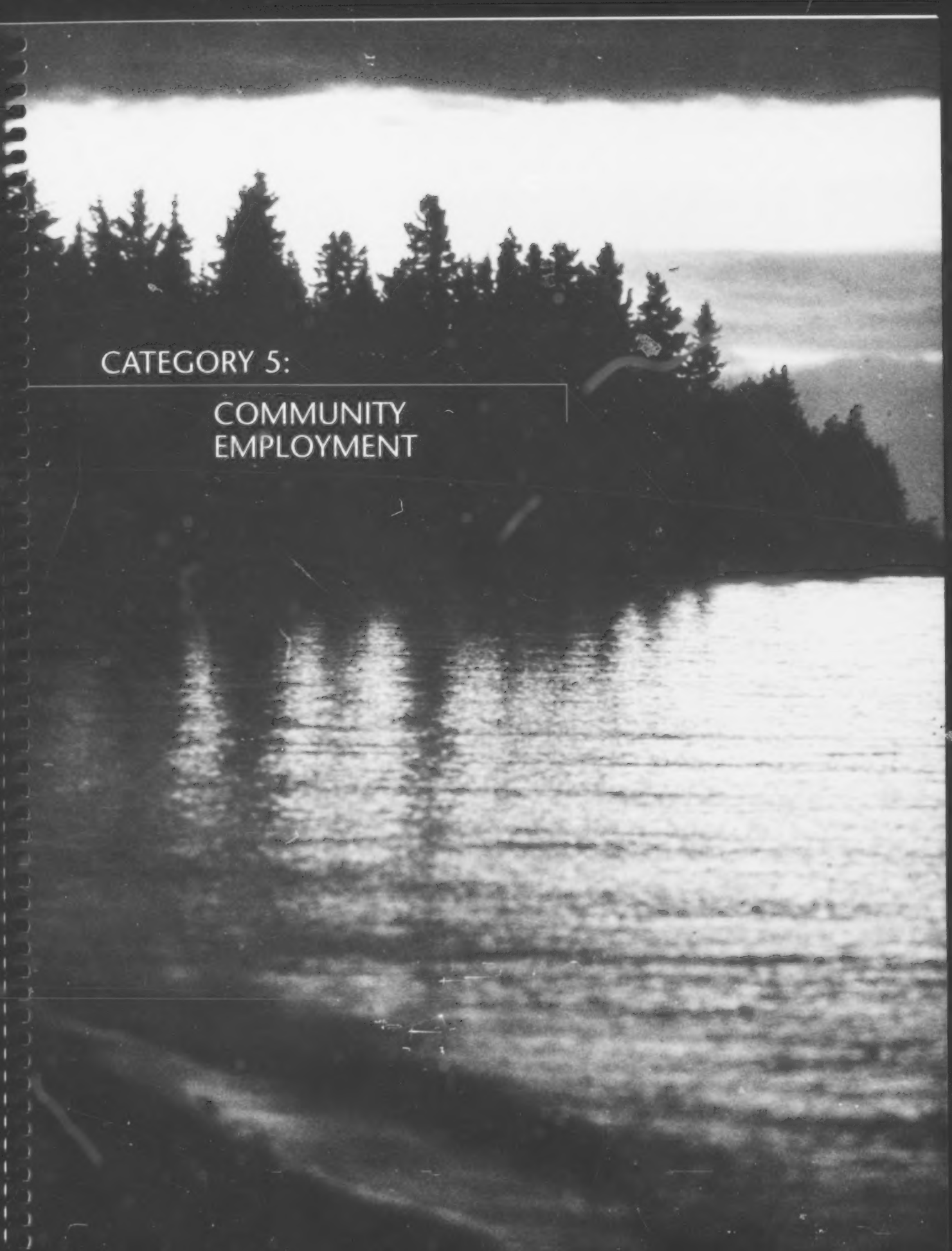

CATEGORY 5:

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Small Steps Lead to Success for Matsqui First Nation, British Columbia

The Matsqui First Nation, located in the Fraser Valley between the cities of Abbotsford and Mission, is a semi-urban community that decided in 1997 to assess the opportunities to develop their relatively small on-reserve forestland base and provide employment for future community members.

"The Matsqui First Nation's forested reserve lands consist of two parcels - approximately 33 hectares of IR #2 adjacent to our residential area and 608 hectares of forest land on Three Islands IR #3 in the Fraser River," explains Alice McKay, Matsqui Band Manager. "We realized we had to start slowly with so little forest to work with."

Planned forest management activities have occurred on the Matsqui Reserve lands since at least 1957, when the entire portion of Three Islands IR #3 was leased to West Tree Farms Limited, a subsidiary of Scott Paper Ltd., for a 40-year term. During the lease term, the existing mixed hardwood and coniferous stands were clear-cut harvested and reforested with a variety of natural and hybrid poplar. The lease was not renewed in 1997 and the Matsqui First Nation began to explore their options and build their capacity to manage their reserve forest lands. By taking small steps, and with the assistance of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) over the last few years, the community has succeeded.

In 1998, the community carried out a forest inventory of IR #2 and prepared a brief options paper/business plan based on the results of the inventory. The work was carried out by Robin Clark Inc., a forest resource consultant, and the business plan recommended that a small-scale logging and milling operation employing two to four community members could be considered, but that there was less forested land than was expected and that the operation would be much more viable if based on a larger forested area.

The community then carried out an ecological and timber inventory of Three Islands IR #3. In order to understand the ecological relationships and timber harvesting potential on IR #3, Robin Clark Inc. was again commissioned to complete a field inventory. Sample plots were established on a 200 metre by 200 metre grid over the entire island by a crew that included community members. The report concluded that the majority of the island was found to be in young age classes

with less than 10 per cent of mature timber remaining. Silviculture treatment options, along with possible non-timber forest products opportunities were outlined. The final conclusion was that a full management plan needed to be completed to ensure the sensitive ecosystems, wildlife habitat and biodiversity values of the island were protected while balancing the ecological, social and economic objectives of the Matsqui First Nation.

The Matsqui First Nation completed their Forestry Management Plan in 2000. The ecosystem-based plan was completed with the cooperation of the community and three Matsqui trainee technicians. The inventories carried out the previous two years lay the foundation for developing a viable and sustainable forest enterprise on the reserve lands. The plan provides for a comprehensive ecosystem network for the reserve lands as well as defining sustainable harvest regimes innovative silviculture treatments while providing the information needed to apply for Federal Timber Permits to carry out the logging activities.

"The logical progression of these projects, building on each other, was the perfect way for us to proceed," says McKay. "The next phases will be to apply for a provincial Woodlot License and actively manage our lands while providing stable employment, maintaining ecosystem integrity and building community capacity. We look forward to the challenges."

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$58,250
FN and Other	$34,000
Total	$92,250

For further information, please contact:

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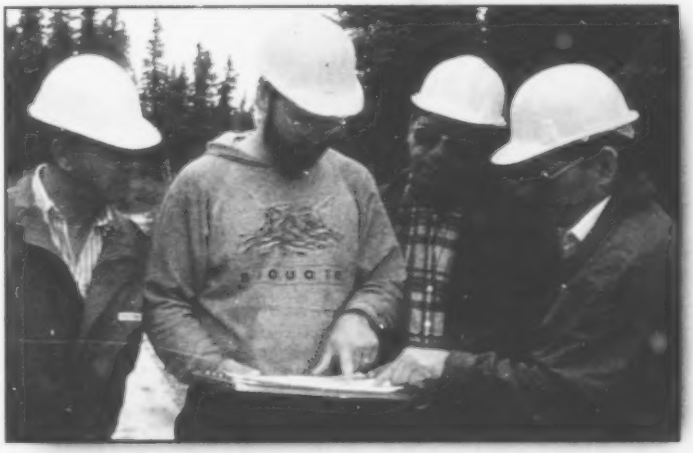
The Betsiamites Forest Improvement and Development Corporation, active since 1987, Quebec



The Betsiamites community owns 25,000 hectares on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River near Baie-Comeau. The Société d'aménagement et de développement forestier de Betsiamites (SADFB) is an Aboriginal undertaking led by a board of directors made up of members of the community. For fifteen years, the SADFB has had a mandate from the Band Council to manage the reserve's forest — an activity that is very important to the community for both social and economic reasons.

The SADFB has been responsible for Aboriginal forest management programs since the Forest Management Program of Indian Lands (FMPIL) was first introduced in 1985-1986. Every year, approximately 20,000 cubic metres are harvested and a few hundred hectares are managed on the community's land. In 2000-2001, for example, the community received $57,500 from the FNFP, which helped it to harvest 21,000 cubic metres, manage 200 hectares, plant 150,000 trees and build 15 kilometres of roads. In 2001-2002, a contribution of $56,300 helped the SADFB to harvest 18,000 cubic metres, manage 160 hectares, plant 150,000 trees and build 6 kilometres of roads. As a result, approximately 650 weeks of work are generated in the community each year. Also in 2001, the SADFB implemented a new software system to help it better manage all its forest activities.

Mindful of the need to diversify its activities and enhance job creation, the community initiated a study in 1997-1998 under the FNFP to identify sectors of the reserve where wildlife potential could support an outfitting operation. In 1999-2000, the community concluded an agreement with the Quebec ministry of natural resources to manage a forest reserve in a public forest adjacent to the community's land. This additional land will make it possible to harvest a few more thousand cubic metres and consolidate jobs within the community.

FNFP contribution

From 1996 to 2002, the first six years of the FNFP, the community received contributions totalling $456,720, or an average of $76,120 per year. The SADFB is continuously seeking ways of improving its profitability. However, given its forestry and social context, it considers that a program such as the FNFP is essential to realizing its forest development activities and creating jobs in the Betsiamites community.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$456,720
FN and Other	$2,847,187
Total	$3,303,907

For further information, please contact:

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ThunDak Silviculture Built on Entrepreneurial Spirit, Adams Lake, British Columbia

Of all the education and job opportunities that Nelson Leon has found for First Nation people while working as an Administrator for Employment and Training Programs in Shuswap territory, the most satisfying job placements are those he created within his own company. When Leon launched ThunDak Silviculture in 1997, he created seven jobs for members of the Adams Lake, Neskonlith, and Little Shuswap Bands.

"I always knew that someday I'd have my own company," Leon says. Though the Adams Lake Band member holds a diploma in greenhouse horticulture, it is the small business management courses he took at Malaspina College that he credits for giving him a solid base of business skills. "I took some classes in business plan development, marketing, business operations, and advertising when I was at Malaspina, which gave me the background I needed to run a company."

Leon also acknowledges the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) for helping him make his business a reality. The FNFP made a total contribution of $40,000 in 1997-1998 and in 1998-1999 to ThunDak Silviculture that allowed Leon to purchase some essential silviculture equipment while developing contract proposals. Besides using the contribution to build a business line of credit, Leon says the support from the FNFP was instrumental in helping him establish his company's credibility with bands and forestry companies in the area. By 1999 the total project value of ThunDak Silviculture was $49,000, a $13,000 increase from the previous year.

ThunDak Silviculture, which is named after Leon's children Thunder and Dakota, has completed five years of contracting. With juvenile spacing, brushing, and pruning contracts from Riverside Forest Products Ltd., Ministry of Forests Kamloops Forest District, International Forest Products Ltd., and Bell Pole Company Ltd., Leon kept five crews working for almost seven months in 1998. Leon's goal for 1999 was to secure contracts in the Kamloops and Salmon Arm Forest Districts.

Leon has put hard work and many hours into his accomplishments. His business day usually starts at 6:30 am, and often doesn't finish until late in the evening. In addition to managing his company, setting up and managing contracts, supervising his crews, writing proposals, and handling his own bookkeeping, Leon works full-time as an administrator for employment and training with the holder in his territory of the Regional Bilateral Agreement with Human Resources Development Canada (funding agreements for skills development, employment, and income support programs). As he juggles the challenges of a young family, a full-time job, and his own company, Leon keeps a close eye on his future business plans. "It takes at least five years to evaluate the success of a company," he says. "I've only been in business for about two years, which isn't enough time to get a true perspective."

It is clear that Leon has a positive perspective on being a First Nation business owner. "It's a great time to be an Aboriginal entrepreneur. There are a lot of opportunities if you want to

work hard," he says. "The way I look at life, the cup is half full, not half empty."

Leon believes that if more First Nation bands encouraged small business development on reserves, there would be more permanent jobs created. "Band-operated businesses are not always part of the real world of economic development," he says. "A band's economic philosophy is often to employ band members first, even if the company is not profitable. Bands may keep a white elephant business because it employs people even though it may not be competitive."

He also points out that privately owned businesses can be a vital source of employment for a First Nations band. His goal is to employ 10 crew members by next year. "The Chief and Council of Neskonlith Band assisted me when I was just getting started," Leon says. "It set a precedent for business development on that reserve by providing a mechanism for the band to support an entrepreneurial venture."

New businesses will also offer valuable training opportunities for First Nations people. ThunDak crews received locally delivered silviculture training, as well as specialized instruction in areas such as first aid and map and compass use.

Leon also feels that businesses owned by First Nations will have a positive effect on Aboriginal communities. "When jobs are created on reserves, there's a significant positive impact on First Nations communities," he says. "Of the First Nations who have found jobs in the forest sector in our area, very few have moved onto supervisory or technical positions. Aboriginal business owners, on the other hand, often encourage their employees to set personal goals, and offer opportunities for them to move ahead in their careers." Leon advises potential business owners to be tenacious, to persevere, and to make a commitment. He also stresses the importance of developing a strong business plan.

"Banks want a marketing plan, they want to know who your customers will be, whether you'll have a positive cash flow," says Leon. "Even though it takes time to invest in business and management skills, the end result will make you a stronger entrepreneur."

He is optimistic about the future for First Nations in the forestry sector. "There's a positive future for First Nations; it's a viable employment opportunity," he says.

It's clear that ThunDak Silviculture is well on its way to demonstrating that First Nations entrepreneurs can make a difference in job creation and economic development in their own communities.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$40,000
FN and Other	$44,965
Total	$84,965

For further information, please contact:

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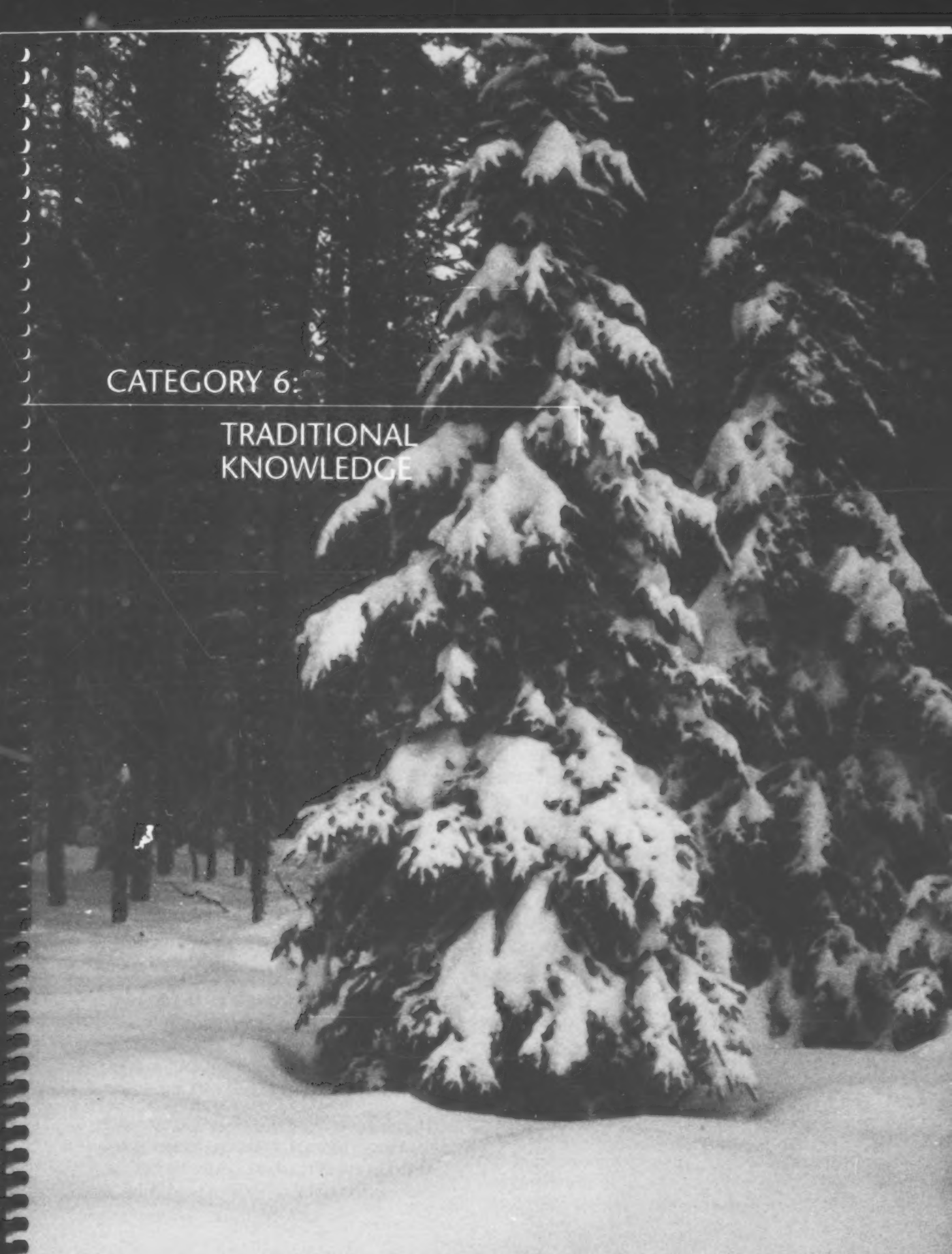

CATEGORY 6:

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Dene Tha' First Nation Traditional Knowledge Study, Alberta

The Dene Tha' First Nation has captured some of their history on paper.

A number of First Nation communities in northern Alberta have been doing traditional land use and occupancy studies over the past few years, says project coordinator Ozzie Sawicki. The Dene Tha' First Nation Traditional Knowledge Study was managed through the University of Calgary Arctic Institute of North America, and Sawicki was contracted to set up and train band members in the operation of the computer system — a Geographical Information System (GIS), which would deal with the compiled data. Sawicki and the system were based in Assumption (Chateh), the main community of Dene Tha' in Northwestern Alberta. Their work also looked at the Dene people of two other neighbouring reserves: Meander River and Bushee.

The result has been a publication called Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study, of which the band retains ownership. The GIS system, which supports and retains the study findings, is also able to produce separate updated maps, indicating special locations such as sacred lands and grave sites.

"The project took about a year and a half to complete," says Sawicki. In the first six to eight months, an Arctic Institute researcher was sent in with a Dene translator to interview community Elders. The conversations were taped and later translated into English. In addition to sharing their memories of the culture and traditions, Elders also helped to identify where former grave and cabin sites

were once located, so the areas might be defined on maps.

The compiled data has become a valuable resource tool. The GIS is a PC-based system with layers of data that are continually updated. People are learning to use it to keep information current. Updates are important because the protection of sacred sites remains a major concern for the community. Fixed point and area information are collected in various levels. The system also helps the Dene-speaking trappers to deal with businesses. For example, in the past, forestry or oil and gas officials might send a notice to them in English and if they received no reply within five days, they would proceed. Today the GIS liaison person, employed on a full-time basis to operate the system, replies to these types of notices with a form letter indicating the item is under consideration and plans the appropriate meetings to deal with the request.

The books are numbered and released only by the band. The maps, indicating historical and sacred locations in relation to the traditional hunting and trapping in the area, work to

pinpoint the significant locations of a once-nomadic people. The Dene Tha' community was established through government regulation in the 1940s. Their land became three reserves within an hour's drive of each other.

Funding for the project came from several sources. The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) provided $60,000 in assistance to the band for this project. The band itself put up about one third of total project costs, says Sawicki, and by 1997-1998 the total project value was $84,700. Four to seven part-time interim jobs were created during the course of the project, when people were needed to translate and transcribe, and Elders were offered an honorarium for their input.

Sawicki calls the whole undertaking a success, as the project collected and compiled much more information than he had originally expected.

The project has received a mixed reaction from people in the community. "It has made people more aware of the traditional aspects of our people and our culture, but now people are wondering where we will go from here," says Sawicki.

The Traditional Land Use/Traditional Knowledge activity was completed over a two-year period, resulting in higher expenditures than reported. Revised amounts reflect total costs. In the time since the initial project was completed, the band has continued to carry out Forest Management activities with the FNFP.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$86,000
FN and Other	$52,189
Total	$138,189

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Líídlii Kue First Nation Using History in Forest Management Planning, Northwest Territories

With the assistance of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) and other partners, the Liidlii Kue First Nation, a member of the Deh Cho First Nations located on the MacKenzie River in the Northwest Territories, was able to capture invaluable information from its Elders on traditional land use and to record it using state-of-the-art technology.

The information, a complete oral history of significant sites, their meaning and uses, was transferred to a Geographic Information System (GIS), "the ultimate land use planning tool," says Lorne West, Canadian Forest Service in Edmonton. "They now have a platform upon which to build and maintain a complete database of information that can be used for forest and other related land use planning."

The FNFP assisted in providing funds to initiate the gathering of data and the development of a forest management and land use plan. The FNFP also assisted in the preparation of traditional land use and occupancy maps and an atlas to be distributed to community members. "To properly assess any substantial development, you need to know what you have, it is the first step and the key to effective land management," says West. "Now that the Liidlii Kue First Nation has a more accurate picture of its resources, its members can decide what to do with it in terms of effective land use with continued respect for the history of the land. Now the people have another tool to help take the best approach," West adds.

According to Allison de Pelham, former executive director of the Liidlii Kue First Nation, the members of the First Nation's Denendeh Resources Committee realized in 1992 that they needed some long-term planning, so they developed a three-year initiative. In 1997, the committee interviewed their hunters, trappers, and harvesters for their knowledge of the land and its usage patterns through the years, as well as the sacred sites. One hundred and ten people were interviewed and individual maps were compiled from the information gathered. "The data will provide us with a baseline for our traditional harvesting," says de Pelham.

In 1998, the community continued to collect information on the location of existing and proposed oil and gas lines, wildlife, and other data, and combined it with the information gathered from Elder interviews on traditional knowledge. The information compiled through the application of a GIS was distributed to the membership and now the First Nation is in a better position to discuss possible resource development and economic initiatives as they arise. "Here, each family will make a decision on its own land base," de Pelham explains.

The FNFP funded and assisted educational workshops in the first year and partially funded the salaries of four interviewers. Additional funding through the Natural Resources Canada Science and Technology Internship Program helped fund a GIS technician to further develop the database. "The funding was fairly critical," says de Pelham. "It was also

flexible, allowing us to fit it into our mandate. The First Nation chose its own priorities."

In the third year, the information was further analyzed to pinpoint sensitive sites and areas of high potential for future initiatives. "We appreciate the role of the First Nation Forestry Program in helping our project," adds de Pelham.

The Land Use Planning Initiative of Liidlii Kue First Nation continues with a process of extended family meetings to explain the results of the traditional land use mapping and the results of the sectoral analysis. This work will start to identify areas in which resource harvesting could begin with full support of the membership.

A positive benefit to Liidlii Kue First Nation's traditional land use occupancy mapping has been the collection of critical information that allows the First Nation to submit the Horn Plateau as a candidate site under the NWT Protected Areas Strategy with financial assistance from the World Wildlife Fund.

This ongoing project continued for several years, up to and including fiscal year 2001-2002. The project has expanded to include identification and assessment of the proposed Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline, particularly as it relates to lands of the Deh Cho member communities and their traditional use areas. Due to staff turnover, additional staff training in GIS has also been procured with FNFP assistance.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$57,260
FN and Other	$248,470
Total	$305,730

For further information, please contact:

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Ria Letcher
Liidlii Kue First Nation
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Traditional Land Use and Occupancy Study, Swan River First Nation, Alberta

In 1998, the Swan River Band, Driftpile Band, and Sucker Creek Band in Alberta (known collectively as part of the Lakeshore First Nations) requested a traditional land use and occupancy study (TLUOS). The First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) and other contributors in the industrial and government sector funded the study, which had three main objectives:

- to map traditional and current environmental knowledge for future development initiatives;
- to help stakeholders negotiate land use and plan resource development for the proposed project area; and
- to help preserve the cultural history of the Lakeshore people for future generations.

The Lakeshore First Nations asked the Arctic Institute of North America (AINA), a non-profit membership organization of the University of Calgary, to help with the study.

The project used an evolving methodology, which means the participatory nature of the project influences how it develops.

Maps were created from data collected from both historical information and the Elders. Typically, the Elders' environmental knowledge comes from their grandparents. This dates first-hand traditional ecological knowledge near 1850, preceding the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899. Through the project, a number of respected Elders and band members were interviewed about the mapping of traditional sites, including graves, cabins, and hunting grounds.

Examples of traditional ecological information on the base map include: migratory patterns, calving sites, wintering sites, habitat boundary changes, migratory pathways, plants (including berries, trees, and roots), and forest fires to help explain some of the habitat changes over time. Ethnographic and cultural information was also integral to the mapping system.

The final document compiled mapping data, ethnographic information, and life stories. Members of the band were trained in Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to ensure continuity in the analysis of traditional patterns of land use.

In July 1999, the Swan River traditional land use and occupancy study project prepared a final document to coincide with the hundredth anniversary commemoration of the signing of Treaty 8 at Lesser Slave Lake. Ultimately, these maps of traditional land use will help stakeholders co-operate in resource development planning and treaty claims and preserve cultural history for education. Lakeshore Chiefs and Councils and the Tribal Council, for example, will use the document in their future dealings with the forest industry. At the same time, schools will use it to help teach children how to keep their traditions alive.

The Swan River First Nation received a $24,000 contribution from the FNFP in 1998-1999 for the project. At that time the total project value was $35,773.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$24,000
FN and Other	$11,773
Total	$35,773

For further information, please contact:

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Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Land Use Study, Harvest Strategy, and Plan, Manitoba

The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation of north-central Manitoba (Nelson House) is developing a comprehensive land use plan for its traditional territory. As part of its provisions, the multi-party Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Implementation Agreement (a successor agreement to the 1977 Northern Flood Agreement) provides for land use planning and resource co-management with the Province of Manitoba. To that end, a resource management board was created to prepare the land use plan for the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Resource Area. The plan addresses the management of forest resources and the potential for commercial forestry development.

In addition, the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation signed the Manitoba Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement on May 29, 1997. As an Entitlement First Nation the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is now selecting some 32,000 hectares of lands pursuant to the Traditional Land Entitlement (TLE) Agreement and the terms of Treaty No. 5. The TLE Agreement also provides for a Community Interest Zone (CIZ) extending in a 30-kilometre radius from the main community at Nelson House. According to the TLE Agreement the interests of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation have priority over most resource-related developments and allocations proposed within the CIZ — including commercial forestry operations — during the three-year land entitlement selection process.

Although the main community at Nelson House is accessible by Provincial Trunk Highway 391, most of the 22,000 square kilometres of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Resource Area is relatively remote and can only be reached by boat, snow machine, dog teams, and by float- and ski-equipped aircraft. In addition to the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation's extensive traditional land uses throughout its territory, it operates Nelson House Forest Products. Not surprisingly, the First Nation wishes to enhance sustainable employment in the forest sector, particularly by producing housing construction materials. Thus, the Chief, Council, and community members are keenly interested in a land use plan that protects traditional uses of lands and natural resources while encouraging commercial forestry operations.

With the exception of the most southerly portions, large-scale commercial forestry operations have not yet developed the traditional territory of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. However, Tolko Manitoba Inc., a forest-based company, now holds a forest management license affecting most of the Nisichawayasihk Resource Area. In December 1997, the company also received provincial licenses for a 13-year forest management plan that proposes extensive forestry operations and road construction activities in the Nelson House Resource Area. The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation wished to integrate the approved and proposed forestry operations of Tolko Manitoba Inc. within the overall land use plan for the Nisichawayasihk Resource Area.

Funded in part under the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is working with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Inc., Natural Resources Secretariat on a Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Land Use Study, Harvest Strategy and Plan. It has the following goals:

- to determine the geographic extent and nature of the traditional use, occupancy, and habitation of lands and natural resources by members of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. This includes identifying sacred, burial, and other special sites and developing a database of these traditional land uses through the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology;
- to document the traditional ecological knowledge of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation with respect to sensitive ecological features and sites, medicinal plants, cumulative changes to environmental processes arising from existing forestry and hydroelectric operations, and other matters;
- to inventory, with the support of GIS technology, the forestry resources within the Nisichawayasihk Resource Area, including areas identified for forest harvesting within the 13-year forest management plan of Tolko Manitoba Inc.;
- to compare traditional land uses to forestry resources within the Nisichawayasihk Resource Area, including the areas identified for forest harvesting within the 13-year forest management plan of Tolko Manitoba Inc.;
- to develop, through community consultation and participation, a timber harvest strategy that protects traditional uses of lands and natural resources in the Nisichawayasihk Resource area and provides for appropriate commercial forestry operations; and
- to initiate negotiations between Tolko Manitoba Inc., the Province of Manitoba and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation regarding the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Harvest Strategy.

The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation received a $42,000 contribution from the FNFP towards this project in 1998-1999. At that time the total project value was $58,622

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$42,000
FN and Other	$16,622
Total	$58,622

For further information, please contact:

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Mi'kmaq Hiking Trail, Pabineau First Nation, New Brunswick

For many years the local government and membership of the Pabineau First Nation community considered restoring an elaborate trail system used by their Mi'kmaq ancestors for thousands of years prior to European contact. This intricate trail follows the shoreline of the Nepisiquit River about 130 kilometres from Mount Carleton in northern New Brunswick. The Mi'kmaq people used the trail for many reasons, including access to tribal hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering sites, spring and fall migration, and as a road to reach other First Nation communities.

In 1995, a Mi'kmaq trail restoration program was initiated. During the first two years, much time was spent gathering information (historical, legends, flora and fauna) and flagging the route to Pabineau Falls. In 1998, aided in part by First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) financial support, the program expanded the trail beyond Nepisiquit Falls and built a footbridge spanning the river. In this way historical activities carried out on traditional territories can be preserved for cultural and ecotourism purposes.

Along the trail, the Pabineau Nation is preparing an inventory of special areas where, for example, legends of Glooscap are alive and waiting to be told. Similarly, the Tobique First Nation is reconstructing the traditional Maliseet trail along the banks of the Tobique River, which will join the Mi'kmaq trail at the Nepisiquit Falls. This historic area is rich in cultural heritage sites that tell much of the traditions of First Nation people who inhabited the region. Fragments of stone tools dating back 5,000 years have been recovered from archeological sites along the riverbanks. To this day, rock blinds used for hunting caribou can be found along various sections of the trail.

The partnership between Pabineau First Nation and the FNFP extended from 1997-1998 to 2001-2002. During that period, the FNFP contributed $75,723 for activities related to the re-establishment of the Mi'kmaq trail.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$75,723
FN and Other	$71,161
Total	$146,884

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Medicinal Plants Within Eel Ground's Forest Lands, New Brunswick

The Eel Ground First Nation has embarked upon a study to identify the medicinal and traditional values of the plants that comprise their forested lands. The study is intended to reclaim much of the information about the plants that has been almost lost or forgotten over time. The knowledge gained from the study will be used to better manage the sustainable use of the forests.

The forest management plan adopted by Eel Ground First Nation recognizes the traditional knowledge of the First Nation people's ancestors. Donna Mae Perley, the project coordinator and manager, views the medicinal plants project as a small component of the overall holistic approach to forest management for Eel Ground and feels that traditional knowledge of Elders is integral to the sustainable management and preservation of the forest biodiversity.

The project also recognizes that commercial forest management practices are generally not designed to accommodate plants with medicinal properties. In some instances, for example, the social, spiritual, ecological, and economic value of medicinal plants may be greater than the value of timber. Eel Ground First Nation acknowledges that it cannot give up timber values entirely. At the same time, the First Nation knows that forest management must be sensitive to the habitat requirements of these mostly understory plants.

A botanist from the University of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, believes that there are between 250 and 300 plant species in the area of the Eel Ground First Nation. Numerous plants have been collected and identified, pressed, and catalogued in a computerized database management system for future reference. Priority has been given to the plants that act as indicators of forest habitat type.

Each pressed plant has its own biography containing the plant's scientific, common, native, and French names. Other information includes the habitat in which the plant grows, its medicinal properties, traditional uses, whether or not it is edible, and any other unique use it may have.

Much of the information concerning the medicinal and traditional uses of the plants has never been documented. Thus, it was necessary to consult with many of the community Elders of the Eel Ground First Nation to try to capture some of the knowledge traditionally passed verbally from generation to generation. Portions of the information obtained will be kept confidential for fear of it being misused or exploited by people outside the community.

Partnerships have been formed between the Eel Ground First Nation, the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP), and the Fundy Model Forest in an effort to fund and provide the expertise necessary to carry out this study. The information from the study will eventually be incorporated into a Geographical

Information System (GIS) along with the forest management plan for the Eel Ground First Nation. Merging of the two bodies of information will make it possible to manage the plants in conjunction with the wood fibre component of the forests. It is hoped that such a management scheme will provide for the sustainability of all forest resources for the benefit of generations to come.

According to Perley, this project intends to bridge Mi'kmaq traditional knowledge with the scientific principles of ecology, botany and, specifically, plant taxonomy. In so doing, it will preserve the biodiversity of the plant species found in Eel Ground's bio-region. Ultimately, the knowledge gathered from Elders will be compiled in a written document that can be easily understood by community members. The document will promote an understanding of each species' habitat and its place and function within the ecosystem. Additionally, it will describe each plant's medicinal qualities, its distribution, and population characteristics across the forested landscape. Once completed, the document will encourage other First Nations searching to revitalize their traditional ways. Hopefully, through the development of partnerships over the course of the project, other similar initiatives will occur on larger land bases.

In 1999-2000 the FNFP contributed $20,000 to the Eel Ground First Nation for the study of medicinal plants; the total project value during the same year was $75,000.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$20,000
FN and Other	$55,000
Total	$75,000

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Blood Tribe Implements Forest Management Plan, Alberta

The Waterton Lakes National Park forest fires of September 1998 affected more than the Park. They also affected the Blood Tribe of southern Alberta whose forested lands on the Blood Timber Limit are nestled on the Park's eastern edge.

Lands traditionally used by the Blood Tribe were allocated to the band in 1888 as the Blood Reserve 148A, subsequently known as the Blood Timber Limit. Over the past century, the band has continued to use these lands as a source of food, timber, firewood, and medicinal and cultural items.

The Blood Tribe has had plans to develop its forest resources for several years. Since 1997, they have received assistance from the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) to determine and promote the timber limit's potential for economic development. The Blood Tribe is an example of the many First Nations that have garnered FNFP support to enhance their forestry-related endeavours and increase economic self-sufficiency.

The Blood Tribe's involvement in the FNFP began in 1997-1998 when the program contributed $27,000 to revise and update the reserve's forest management plan. A follow-up project in 1998-1999 was implemented to incorporate a traditional land use study and archeological survey into the forest management plan. The FNFP contributed $13,800 to this initiative and by 1998-1999 the total value of the project was $55,335.

In 1999-2000 the FNFP contributed $23,923 to the Blood Tribe to continue in its forest management endeavours. Of these funds, $22,000 was designated for developing and implementing a plan to conduct selective timber harvesting. The remainder went to the assessment of new archeological sites on the timber limit that were uncovered following the 1998 wildfire.

The timber limit is a 19.43 square-kilometre piece of land that is bordered on three sides by the Waterton Lakes National Park. The timber limit had been allowed to remain in its natural state with no commercial logging or other development, such as residential housing, taking place. The main species of trees on the timber limit are Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, white spruce, and aspen. Conifers make up 75 per cent of the growing stock.

Prior to the 1998 forest fire, the timber limit had not seen wildfire for over 100 years. This led to an accumulation of a significant fuel load on the forest floor and contributed to the magnitude and intensity of the subsequent fire.

The 1999-2000 project was designed to thin the forest and, where necessary, remove the excessive accumulation of forest biomass. Three objectives were set for this initiative. First, the removal of forest biomass as a preventative measure in reducing the fire hazard on the timber limit; secondly, the project output would further enhance the habitat and the growth of trees for future generations and foster a healthy forest; and lastly, harvested timber would create employment and revenue for the Blood Tribe.

The Blood Tribe is also actively involved in the conservation of an endangered species of fish: the bull trout. The Upper Belly River, which runs through the timber limit, contains one of the last viable bull trout populations that remain in southern Alberta. In addition to implementing a zero-harvest regulation on the bull trout, the band has been conducting a multi-year study to assess the activity of the trout as they migrate through the Belly River. In summary, this project is one part of the longer-term integrated land management plan that the Blood Tribe has developed to enhance its timber and non-timber resources.

While no FNFP activity occurred in 2000-2001, the band resumed its project in 2001-2002 to conduct an insect diversity research survey project on the timber limit. This project received $8,000 in assistance from the FNFP.

TOTAL FUNDING

FNFP funding	$72,754
FN and Other	$38,458
Total	$111,212

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